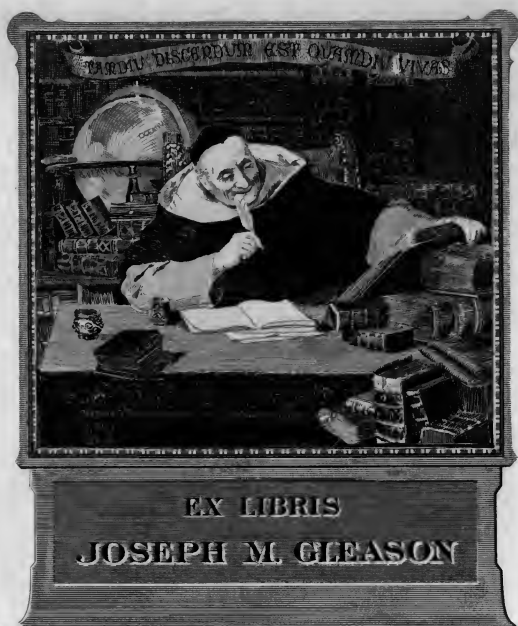


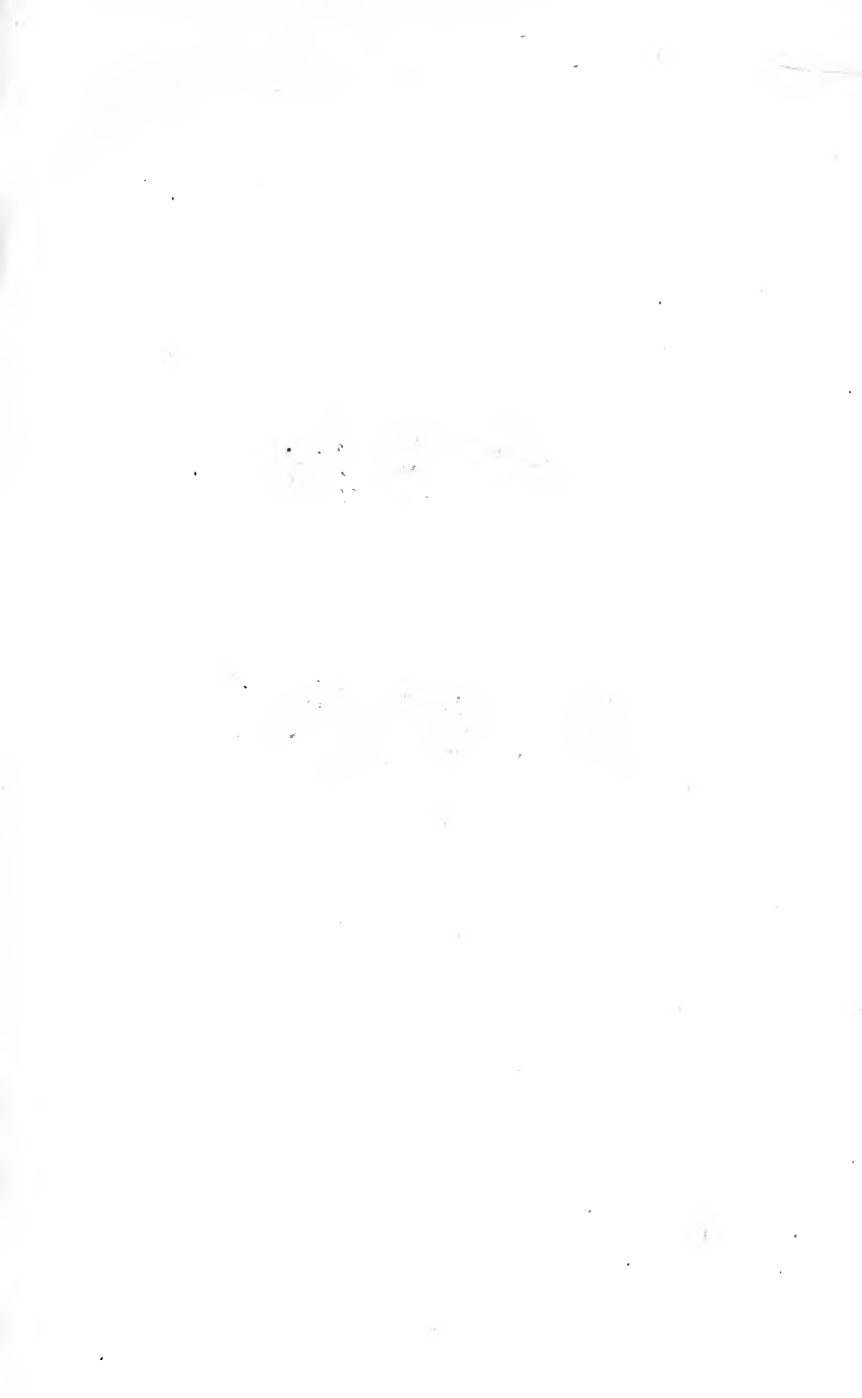
In the Shadow
of
San Juan

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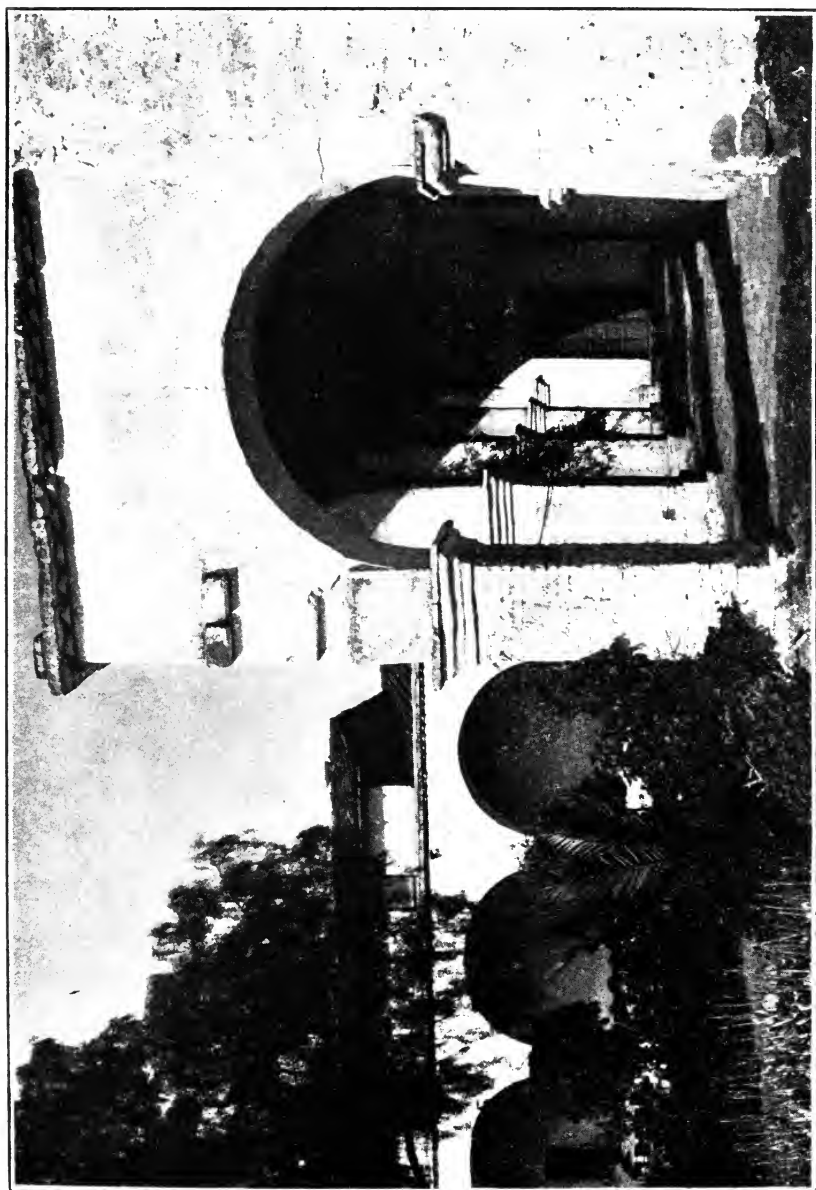
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In the Shadow of San Juan

MAURICE McNEILL ARMSTRONG

Los Angeles, Cal

PUBLISHING CO

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Corridor of Mission San Juan
at Capistrano.



*Corridor of Mission San Juan
at Capistrano.*

In the Shadow of San Juan

By MAURICE McNEILL ARMSTRONG

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

Corridor of Mission San Juan
at Capistrano, . Frontispiece

A Window of the Past, . Page 48

Door of the Chapel at
Capistrano, . . Page 96

IN THE SHADOW
OF
SAN JUAN

INTRODUCTION.



ESTLED against the protecting walls of an adobe ruin at Capistrano I found a neglected rosebush that had long fought against adverse conditions and against unfriendly growth, so that its form was gnarled and stunted. One very small but wonderfully scented blossom was half hidden among the dust-covered leaves that matched the dusky walls behind. So similar was the plant to its surroundings that I would have stepped upon and crushed it had not a breath of perfume in the desolate waste startled me.

It seemed as though the plant, exer-

cising an intelligence, and realizing it could no longer attract by magnificence of flowers or foliage, sought aid by throwing all of its remaining strength into fragrance for a last, dying appeal. Nor was its call in vain, for it has been since removed to more friendly surroundings and more worthy care, and the fragrance of its later flowers has delighted many a visitor.

The grandeur of the Mission Days of California has passed away, but lingering around the ruined Missions is their alluring atmosphere, as compelling in its charm as the perfume of that neglected rosebush at Capistrano. And like the rose of the forgotten garden, this relic of the old days is transplanted to new soil that it may not be forever lost.

CHAPTER I.



IN THE SHADOW OF SAN JUAN.

CHAPTER I.



IN those days the Republic was young and the American Jason had not begun his quest of the Golden Fleece. Those were the Mission days in California, and the romances, intrigues and lesser history of that age were lost with the passing of the conquered race or hidden through the Confessional in those sepulchral citadels the Spanish padres had scattered through the more fertile valleys.

Only by chance does one come upon

glimpses of that life, as the hidden treasures of the Moors are found in the ancient walls and ruins of the Alhambra. And thus, by chance, I came upon this record of life in the shadow of San Juan, wherein is mingled a story that at times is clear in all its detail—at others vaguely dimmed by age—after the manner of a scene by moonlight, where detail is the more pronounced by reason of the dark depths and shadows surrounding it.

However, the story may be the better for age, like that flask of old Spanish wine I possess made by that Senor Saucedo you soon will know, and labeled, perhaps, by Rosa or Mariana, or, as so often occurs when we too thoroughly investigate, in unromantic fashion, by Dolores the maid. And who knows but

that the bottle of brandy standing beside it was filled from the same cask from which Juan Fernandez and Senor Andrade were served that eventful day in 1842 when this history began?

As to its verity there is no doubt, for that same Juan Fernandez, then in the last years of his life, recounted to me—often word for word—and scene for scene—the past which to him was most of life. I have kept his secret, but now that he is gone I write it down in his words for the present generation, realizing too well, however, how much is lost in the telling by the absence of Senor Juan's wonderful presence and sonorous, effective voice.

Where now, began Juan Fernandez, you see the ruins of a large adobe ranch

house standing a short distance beyond this old Mission, was the home of Senor Saucedo, a wine maker at Capistrano, and in the older days Senor Saucedo gave two reasons for the popularity of his hacienda. One was his wines—and it was an index to his character that he always mentioned them first—and the other was his daughters.

Charming as was Rosa, in the presence of her older sister, an irresistible attraction drew you to Mariana, or, as she was more familiarly called, "The Beauty of San Juan," for such was her devotion and religious spirit that she seemed more the beauty of the Mission than of the little settlement which then, as now, bore the name of Capistrano. If, in describing certain scenes, I appear inconsistent, remember that I de-

· scribe them as scenes with whose full detail I was familiar though not always present, for with the passing of time so often have I recalled those of which I knew only from others that they have become as real to me as those in which I personally figured.

I will begin with my first visit to the home of Mariana's father. I had anticipated paternal opposition to my suit, but having fallen a victim to her charms, the intervals between the merry parties in the district proved much too long, and, no reasonable opportunity offering itself to see her, I determined to ride to Capistrano.

It was a rainy morning in the Spring of 1842, and Saucedo was particularly gruff. He was seated in his big chair in the room which was used as both liv-

ing and dining room, for it was long and broad and panelled with great rough beams, the mesquite fire in the open fireplace lighting his features and accentuating with shadows their harsher lines, when Rosa, pausing as she removed the dishes from the table, turned suddenly, and as though she reflected his spirit and the weather—her pretty lips puckering poutingly—began,

“I wish it would stop raining. The mountains have been hidden for three days and we have seen only the foothills.”

Barely removing his pipe, Saucedo answered:

“This rain is money to us. There will be no shortage of grapes for wine this year.”

“Ah,” sighed Rosa, “but the more

grapes the more work. Your words are as cheerless and gloomy as the weather."

Then, laughing, she added: "You should have reminded me, as does Mariana, how magnificent the snow-covered range will appear when the cloud curtain is lifted. We would be a sad trio were it not for Mariana, father."

And Mariana was indeed the sunshine in that household.

In answer, Saucedá grumbled:

"Mariana has too much enthusiasm. She does not take life seriously enough for future good. This is a harsh world at best, so be assured of that and learn to endure it."

That was the gloom and then the sunshine entered. Throwing open the outer door, in dashed Mariana, a great

bunch of rain-splashed wild flowers in her arms, her rosy cheeks glistening with the welcome rain. Her joyous laugh at any other time would have been irresistible, but obtaining no response, it vanished, and pausing, she said with good-humored surprise:

“Why are you so down-hearted over a few rainy days? This is glorious weather.”

“Glorious weather!” said Rosa, “I fail to see the glorious part of it.”

“Nor would you, Mariana,” Saucedo hastened to add, and not without some show of temper, “if you remained here attending to the duties of the house.”

“I love the rain,” she answered, and shaking the wild beauties she was holding into a more effective position she added, “and the flowers. Nature talks

to our hearts through the flowers.”

By this time the shower had become a dashing rain and no longer could one trace the rain drops trickling down the western panes, for the fickle wind dashed them in great splashes, and often, against the glass, blurring the view of the world without. Saucedá settled back and, puffing at his pipe, began to doze again. With deft hands Mariana divided the poppies and the lupins, and, gathering them into bowls, put the blue ones on the table against the wall and the golden poppies before the window where they would catch the first stray rays of sunlight and open to greater glory.

As Rosa continued clearing the table, Mariana asked:

"Where is Dolores? Has she not returned?"

"No," answered Rosa, and awaited a further speech from the Minerva of the family. It came thus:

"I wonder sometimes, Rosa, if you have any very strong feelings or emotions, you have such a perfect control over them."

"Happiness is all I need, and you supply most of mine, dear."

The childish frankness of Rosa's answers was charming. Mariana smiled.

"And the supply is sometimes limited?"

Rosa laughed. "Yes, and generally there is not enough for the three of us, so father rarely has any."

"Rarely ever," sighed Mariana, with a despairing gesture. "Even I cannot

arouse him often. Sometimes when I find I am having some success with him he appears so provoked that I draw back into my serious self like a frightened clam into its shell. It is strange that we—father and daughter—should be so unlike and so misunderstand one another.”

This unburdening of her thoughts should have shown Rosa some awakening or change had come over Mariana, but Rosa did not observe it. Looking over at her father, Mariana continued, slowly, almost to herself:

“Perhaps it is wrong to speak thus, but I may not always have to be immured in this chilling atmosphere, I will—”

The sentence was not completed, the entrance of Dolores, the maid, inter-

rupting the sisters. At the request of Mariana, Dolores completed the clearing of the table. As she lifted the cloth the rushing folds knocked the pipe from Saucedá's mouth. Such incidents were catastrophes in that household.

"Cuidado!" shouted the half-wakened sleeper. But Morpheus had too strong a hold, and he dozed again.

"Dolores, you are careless," reproved Rosa.

Sauceda having settled himself, apparently asleep again, and Dolores having entered into the next room with the cloth, Rosa began:

"Dolores interrupted us. You will—what?"

"I will marry," answered the other.

"You believe you can find some one to please you? You never have."

“Rosa, if I did not know how many worthy suitors seek my hand I would marry the first gentleman that next enters this house rather than remain single.”

“It might be old Senor Andrade,” hinted Rosa slyly.

“Possibly, and it might be—” and here Mariana paused laughingly, her head poised in that delightfully tantalizing manner of a charming woman about to impart an interesting secret.

Perhaps Saucedo was not sleeping during this last, for before Mariana finished her sentence he interrupted disagreeably,

“No, it would not.”

“Why not?” queried the startled Mariana.

“Because I have decided on An-

drade," answered Saucedá with an air of great finality. The resulting pause was impressive. That speech was the forerunner of a great conflict between two strong wills; and the silence was like that which precedes a storm.

Such was the auspicious, or rather, inauspicious, set of circumstances that was to usher me into the presence of Senor Saucedá and Mariana.

Saucedá's unexpected assertion of authority was not without effect. In subdued whispers the sisters continued their conversation.

"Whom might it be?" asked Rosa.

At that moment I was passing the window that faced the patio or inner court of the house. Mariana, with a tone of defiance she intended her father to observe, answered boldly, with a

brave toss of her queenly head—as few but a Senorita can toss it—

“It might be”—pausing—“Senor Juan Fernandez.”

Sauceda, surprised at a defiance he could scarcely believe, raised in his chair, listening intently for a further outbreak to reprimand.

“Do you remember him, Rosa?” asked Mariana.

The question was never answered, for hearing my knock, “There is some one now,” said Rosa. “I will let them in,” and, opening the door, graciously asked:

“Will you enter, Senor?”

Surprised, Mariana advanced to meet me.

“Senor Fernandez—my father,” she said, introducing us. And after my

somewhat embarrassed return of the greeting, continued:

“This is unpleasant weather for you to be traveling.”

“Even a rainy day is not without its rewards,” I ventured.

“How has it rewarded you, Senor?”

“By forcing me to become a guest in the Temple of Venus.”

“Venus?” She raised her eyebrows inquiringly.

“Yes, the Goddess of Beauty,” I answered, and I perceived by the beaming glance of Dolores, who had entered and heard the last words, that Mariana was much loved in that household.

Sauceda then addressed me.

“You are welcome here, Senor Fernandez, as is any stranger at such a

time, but you have me to thank for any hospitality you may receive."

I was surprised. It was not the style of welcome a stranger was accustomed to receive in New Spain. Perhaps I had unintentionally offended him. So I sought to repair the error by a speech complimentary.

"A thousand pardons, Senor, my remark was meant in the best of spirit. If I mistake not, this is the house of Senor Saucedo, maker of fine wines."

Here Rosa interrupted the embarrassment by asking:

"Would you like some, Senor?"

"I have heard of the products of Senor Saucedo's vineyards before and have tasted of them and had no occasion for regret. Yes, thank you," I answered.

“Dolores, some wine for Senor,”
commanded Rosa.

After Dolores left silence ensued. The pause was broken by Saucedo.

“I am only a wine maker,” said he, “but I know my business. You have heard of me, Senor Fernandez, and I have heard of you, but our reports differ. I have heard that Senor Fernandez is a gay lad, very handsome, but with little manner, and no judgment.”

At that speech I knew that it was no chance remark that had occasioned his enmity. There was a more forcible cause that I was not slow at understanding and which you have doubtless guessed—he suspected me as a rival to a more favored suitor for Mariana’s hand.

It is one of the pleasures of old age

to recall the attractions of a splendid youth, and now, without vanity, I can say that in the sports, at the dances, and, I am sorry to add, at the wine also, Juan Fernandez had few equals and no superiors.

I cared not for his opinion, but to clear myself in her eyes—the most wonderful eyes in the world—I answered:

“Perhaps I do deserve that reputation somewhat. The ruggedness of my youth makes me forget myself at times, but why should I grow sober while I am young? Back in the history of Spain my ancestors were kings. Time has changed that. Another line sits grimly on the throne, and I, who should be there, am free of all the cares of state, a plain citizen of the Republic of Mexico.”

Had I but known, it was placing me the more unfavorably before Saucedá to have so boasted of the Republic, as you will soon see.

At this moment Dolores returned with the wine, and handing it to Rosa, she artlessly tendered it to me. Taking it, I thanked her, and holding it high—and looking Saucedá steadily in the eyes—realizing that he perhaps favored the French king's conspiracy to obtain California, answered him as enemy to enemy.

“I drink to the only king I know, or Youth has ever known—Pleasure!”

Saucedá knew not what to answer. He was no fool, but he was not so quick-witted as was Mariana.

“From what I have heard,” he stam-

mered, angrily, "you drink too much wine, Senor Fernandez."

For some reason I had earned the admiration of Dolores, for she dared to speak in my favor.

"The wine gives his cheeks a fine color," she murmured.

"Wine is like all pleasures," censured Saucedá; "an excellent thing, but too much surfeits one."

I had the spirit of raillery that day, and I answered:

"No, it is like the kisses of a charming woman; one trial is not enough."

"What!" shouted Saucedá. "You speak from experience! A light tongue and a light heart generally go together."

"And you might add—a light purse,"

I answered, careless of the consequences.

There is no telling what might next have happened, for at that moment a loud knocking was heard at the door, and opening it unceremoniously, Senor Andrade, who I later came to know too well, entered. I at once guessed by the sudden warmth of greeting, by the more than hospitable welcome of Saucedá, and the bored and listless greeting of Mariana, to this old gentleman, that this was my rival—the favored suitor in Saucedá's eyes. Mariana did not speak.

“Senor Andrade here in such weather!” asked Rosa in surprise, for she had not learned to distrust him.

Rising and approaching him cordially, Saucedá remarked:

“You should be more watchful of

your health, Senor. You are not accustomed to our climate."

"This climate is not unlike that of Spain, and even milder, in my opinion. Besides you speak as though this heavenly valley was possessed of a severe climate," replied Andrade gayly. "I am not young, but this rain is only a tonic. The weather is clearing now, and a glass of your good brandy will prevent any serious consequences."

The proud old wine maker was thoroughly sensible to a compliment bestowed by the proper suitor, for, rubbing his palms delightedly together, he chuckled:

"They cannot be in my house two minutes without praising my liquors. Rosa, some wine for Senor."

"You mean brandy, father," corrected Rosa.

"Yes, brandy," he replied.

"Wait," said Andrade, a sudden question clouding his features. "What has made you so thoughtless, Mariana? You generally think of the wine."

"Never so quickly as you, Senor," answered Mariana, laughing, a deep suspicion of sarcasm and rebuke in her voice. "Like the weather, Senor Andrade, I am changeable, and Rosa can get it more graciously than I. Also, Dolores is here."

Dolores, who had been impudently listening, started guiltily to dusting, but stopped for orders.

"Bring some brandy for Senor Andrade, Dolores; Senor does not wish Rosa to go," said Mariana.

As Dolores left the room Andrade, angered by Mariana's unyielding attitude, in a very imperious, self-confident tone, sought to humiliate her by manner and words.

"You are in a disagreeable humor this morning. A nice reward for my ride in the rain."

Without offering a reply, her silence more effective than mere tantalizing words, Mariana toyed carelessly with the petals of a flower. The language of silence—the speech implied in movement of the fan or slow destruction of the willing flower—is nowhere understood so well as among the daughters of Spain.

Andrade paled with anger, his hands trembled and he longed for revenge.

"Do you imagine, Senorita Saucedá,"

he thundered, "that I endure these long rides in the rain for the mere pleasure of splattering myself with mud and drenching my clothes with rain?"

Now the drinking of liquors at this and later periods of Andrade's career was his weakest point, as Mariana well knew when she asked:

"Is not a glass of father's delicious brandy sufficient reward?"

Dolores arriving at that time had just handed the glass to Andrade as her sentence was completed. Pausing angrily, he looked threateningly into the quivering blaze of color before him, and, reflecting its agitation, shouted:

"The brandy! The brandy! No." and dashed the glass violently to the floor.

"No," he continued slowly, and then

added with much sarcasm as he looked in my direction, "I came over to see how you entertain yourself when you are not expecting me."

There is no denying that Andrade had an innate knowledge of the dramatic, and at this, as on many occasions, he brought his full knowledge of that subject into use. Following the effect of his remark closely, he continued sternly to Mariana:

"Are you ready to continue sitting for the portrait, or will your attractive stranger demand your attention?"

"Pardon me, you have never met?" she asked, calmly. "There are so few strangers in this part of the world I believed you had. Senor Andrade—Senor Fernandez." We bowed coldly.

“You are ready, Mariana?” demanded the artist.

There was silence save for Dolores, who completed picking up the broken glass and then slipped quietly from the room.

“You must know, Senor, it is impossible for me to grant you that favor now.”

“What!” screamed Andrade, losing all control of his feelings. “After I have ridden these miles and in this weather to paint you, you refuse! You! Why, the Queen of Spain never dared to treat me as contemptuously as you have.”

“I confess, Senor Andrade,” she answered, meekly, “I am only a simple child of the New World and am not familiar enough with court etiquette to

know what is proper under the circumstances. Here we do as we please without regard to your strict rules of form, only asking the approval of our conscience. You misunderstand us or you would not be angry. Rosa, hand Senor Andrade another glass of brandy."

Andrade was purple with rage. This simple speech was so unlike the brilliant answers and stinging sarcasm that he was accustomed to hear in the Old World, and which inspired even more clever and effective answer on his part, he was completely outwitted.

"If you were clever," he said, "you would not have to resort to insult to cover your discomfiture."

Mariana smiled as she answered.

"I am sorry I am not clever. I yield all the honors in that field to you, Senor

Andrade, since you seem to claim them."

"She is going too far. She is going too far," muttered Saucedá, who thus far had maintained a discreet silence, and he called sternly, "Mariana!"

Andrade, realizing his defeat, turned to the father.

"Saucedá, I would speak with you," he said, leading the way into the adjoining room.

"Yes, yes," answered Saucedá as he prepared to follow.

With a sigh of temporary relief, at least, we saw the closing of the great oak door after them.

CHAPTER II.

CHAPTER II.



ATE did not leave us long alone. The outer door swung open and a middle-aged, handsome Frenchman entered, for then, as now, California was a cosmopolitan country.

“Pardon, is Mlle. Rosa in?” he asked.

Calling Rosa, who had made an opportunity to leave us together, Mariana introduced Monsieur Duflot de Mofras to me. He was a very polished gentleman, and when Rosa entered it was quite plain she liked this stately courtier.

“Oh, Dufлот,” she said, teasingly, “Mariana’s admirers come in the rain, but you wait for clear weather, it seems. You think more of your pleasure than mine, does it not look so?” imitating to perfection his quaint brogue.

“I am not a goose, Rosa,” answered the embarrassed De Mofras; “wet weather does not suit me. You understand?”

“Perfectly,” said Rosa. “You mean to infer that Mariana’s admirers are geese.”

Poor fellow! I well knew how to sympathize with him in his embarrassment. Turning to me appealingly, he apologized:

“Pardon, Senor, I do not mean it just that way. Rosa, you are always trying to entangle me.”

Rosa laughed merrily. She knew how well she had De Mofras in her power.

"I will on this condition; that you come with me," she said. "The weather has cleared now. Nor does Mariana require your presence, do you, Mariana?" And she winked roguishly at me as she said the last.

"I have one goose," retorted Mariana laughingly. "Now we are even, Monsieur de Mofras, are we not?"

And all of us laughed merrily as the two went into the garden.

"She contrives to make life thoroughly miserable for that poor Frenchman," said Mariana.

"He apparently enjoys it," I suggested.

"Because he is unused to such treatment and the novelty provides inter-

est," she answered. "He is one of those men who consider themselves absolutely irresistible—and Rosa is doubtless arousing some misgivings in his mind."

In those days I was poor and just about to set out for Spain in an attempt to recover lands that were my father's. And my meager fortune was scarcely enough to meet my needs. Otherwise Mariana would have sailed with me and this story would be differently told. Thus does Fate intervene.

For the first time we were alone, and with the artlessness of the Southern races she took my hand, and, fearful I would leave, murmured:

"Stay, Juan. Andrade plans with father and you can assist me."

"Your father needs no assistance," I

A Window of the Past.

est," she answered. "He is one of those men who consider themselves absolutely irresistible—and Rosa is doubtless arousing some misgivings in his mind."

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"Stay, Juan. Andrade plans with father and you can assist me."

"Your father needs no assistance," I





boldly said, "if what I have heard of his actions is true."

"He is only hot-tempered," she assured me, "but Andrade is cool, scheming and relentless." Then, courage returning, she cried, "If my father loves me, finally, I, and not Senor Andrade, will control his actions. It is a woman's wit against a man's." Then, hearing a movement in the room beyond, "They are coming now," she said. "Ah—" and she trembled as I held her—"My father knows me so well. From all others I can hide some of my weaknesses, but he knows every vulnerable point, and he has told Andrade every one of them."

Sauceda advanced sternly into the room with all the dignity of an outraged patriarch, Andrade following. Ignor-

ing me, he turned to Mariana and asked sharply:

“Where is Rosa? Call her here.”

“She is with Monsieur de Mofras,” she answered, after calling to her. And from the contented look on Saucedá’s face as she mentioned the Frenchman I knew the crafty wine maker for a schemer with the French against our Republic. Rosa entered.

“Yes,” she said.

“Your father asked for you, Rosa,” replied Mariana.

“Yes,” said Saucedá, brutally; “you seem to know this Fernandez. Have you met him before he came here to-day?”

“Yes, father, twice,” she answered, frankly.

"Twice," he snarled, "and Mariana, has she met him?"

"Why do you not ask her?" evaded Rosa.

"How often has Mariana met him?" stormed Saucedo.

"Twice that I know of," said Rosa, meekly.

"You think there were times you do not know of?" he continued.

"I do not know," she answered, simply.

"You may go now—De Mofras is waiting," added Andrade, even then attempting to force his domination upon the household. Rosa left us. Turning to me, Saucedo demanded:

"Senor Fernandez, why did you need a storm as your pretext for coming here?"

"I did not," I answered. "Your daughter would be sufficient inducement."

"I do not accept frivolous answers. How many times have you met her?" His anger was intense as he spoke the last.

"I cannot answer that," I said, discreetly, "since it concerns your daughter also."

"Eh?" he demanded, furiously.

Very calmly I repeated the answer.

"I cannot answer that since it concerns your daughter also."

Mariana interrupted. "We have met eight times," she said. "I have no reason for not telling you."

"Indeed," sneered Saucedá, "then why did you not tell me sooner? When

meetings are necessarily secret there must be some reason for secrecy."

Andrade, who had said nothing during the foregoing, could not resist one shaft of sarcasm.

"Senor is a brave soldier when he has a Jeanne d'Arc to fight for him. You will have to obtain your information from your daughter and not from this surly fellow," he added, becoming disagreeably personal. As an unbidden guest it was not my time to contract a quarrel or provoke a fight, so I held my peace. Saucedá began again.

"Mariana, what was the cause of your secrecy? Why was it necessary to keep me uninformed?"

"There was no reason for not telling you, and none for informing you."

Her answers gave so little oppor-

tunity for anger; so calm and so resourceful were they that they resisted his attack as the surface of a smooth wall resists the mountain climber. Clearly he wanted some indiscreet speech upon her part or mine to excuse harshness on his.

"There must have been a reason," he continued. "There is a reason for everything." Then, with a cruel tone of contempt and suggestion, "Perhaps you knew of none."

"I did not," she answered. "Perhaps I did not tell you because I feared you would be angry."

Here was Saucedá's opportunity. He became overbearing, brutal.

"What cause have you for thinking I might be angry? Am I ever angry,

eh? You thought I would object, but you intended to disobey."

To understand fully the effect of this speech upon Mariana one must know that, though she had inherited a resourceful mind, and also, from her father, at least, the elements of proper self-defense, she had been so imbued with the gentle spirit of kindness of the Mission training as to defend with quiet speech rather than force. And that certain quality of honesty and frankness made them doubly effective.

"You thought I would object—but you meant to disobey," Saucedá had complained. —

"It is not so much your nature to object, father, as Senor Andrade's," she answered.

"Then I have no mind of my own?"

grumbled Saucedá, somewhat subdued.

"No, father, I did not say that."

From her answer it was plain there was no further satisfaction to be had on that subject. Saucedá then turned his attack to me.

"You thought it unnecessary to investigate concerning this Fernandez—his ancestry, his history—did you?"

"I have heard him well spoken of, and his appearance answers for him also," commented Mariana.

"Yes, his appearance speaks for him, but you did not consider your father the proper source of information," said Saucedá with sarcasm.

Before answering, Mariana looked at Andrade and then spoke.

"I did not believe Senor Andrade

would be entirely impartial in his report concerning Senor Fernandez.”

Andrade flushed. “The report would not be flattering even if made by a casual observer,” he retorted. “It would be found that he is—”

Mariana stopped his words with a gesture. “No, Senor Fernandez is a guest in this house, as you are, Senor Andrade, and if you have words of insult to offer they must not be given in my presence. While he is here I will answer for him.”

“You know enough in six meetings to enable you to speak with so much assurance concerning him?” asked Andrade.

“In eight,” she answered, and smiled at his discomfiture. It was a frank, open smile born of a clear conscience,

and somewhat silenced the angry schemers. Then with a covert reference to Andrade's boasted lineage, she continued:

"We are now beyond the lines of ancestry. When Mexico became a Republic she renounced the entanglements of title. Those we hear now are by courtesy and not by law."

Andrade, tired of fencing with so clever an opponent, addressed me. "There are some titles that cannot be proven in the courts, are there not, Senor Fernandez?" referring to my father's estates I sought to obtain.

"The future will determine that," I answered.

Again Mariana spoke.

"Your insinuations are unnecessary, Senor Andrade. Even should the courts

of Spain deny his heirship. I would choose him beyond any rank and title you can name."

"It shall go no further," shouted Saucedá. "I forbid you, Mariana, to see this Fernandez again."

Mariana's speech had created consternation in their plans. Andrade leaned closer to Saucedá and whispered, "There is nothing more we can say now." Saucedá straightened up, paused, and said, steadily:

"These are the last words on the subject we will have for the present. Your guest may go. And not even the pretext of a rain storm is to allow him a welcome here again."

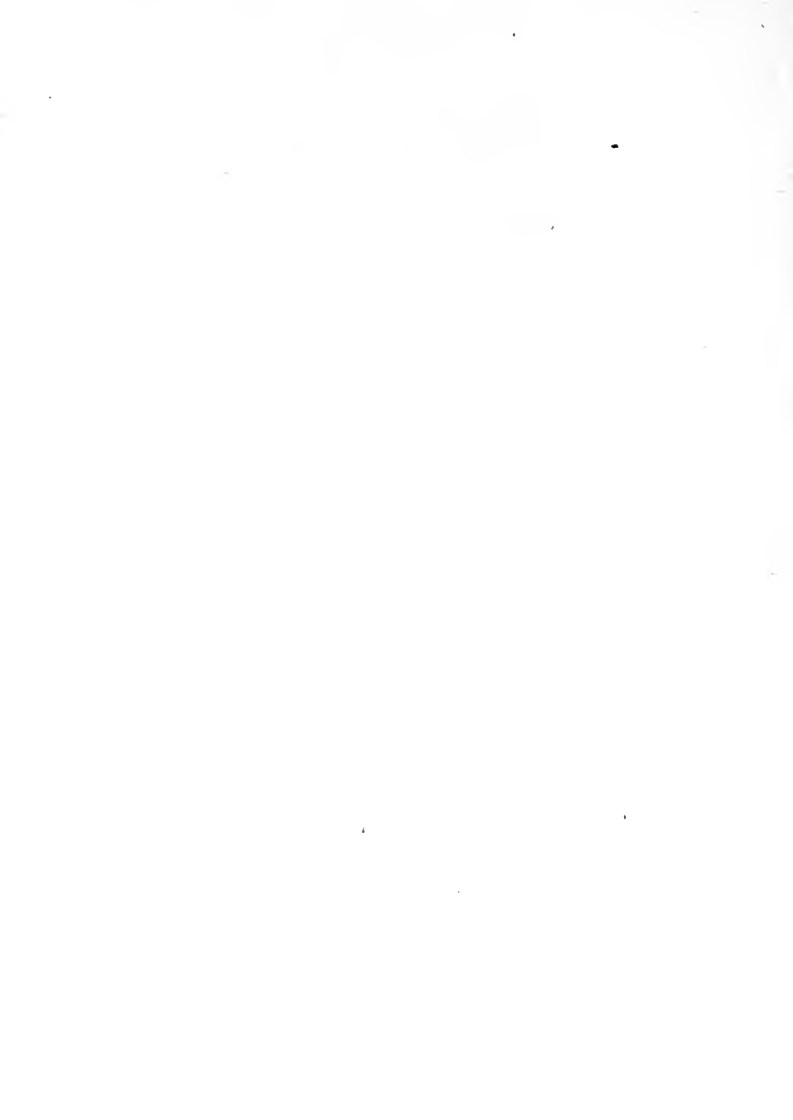
I turned and silently took my hat and cloak, and in silence stepped into the patio without. There I paused a mo-

ment and looked back at Mariana, who had partly followed me to the door. I can hear the melody of her voice now as she spoke.

“I have a welcome for you always, but this is also my father’s house. You will forgive me?”

“With all my heart,” I answered. And the door was closed.

CHAPTER III.



CHAPTER III.



It was night and two weeks later before I again saw that inner court and the long, wide porch that surrounded it. A moonlight night, so brilliant that it afforded the unwelcome suitor no protection. They were dancing within, but well I knew Mariana would not dance all of the dances. Some time she must be alone in the garden with herself—and, pardon, Señor—thoughts of me.

Who would guess of the former beauty of that inner garden from its

ruins? Ah, the pleasures of yesterday are the regrets and sorrows of the present.

In the shadow of a jasmine vine I watched for some opportunity of seeing Mariana alone. Inside the dancers passed in swift confusion, the mandolins and guitars making the most romantic accompaniment in the world. Small wonder that I, intoxicated with the night—the wondrous odor of the jasmine blossoms—and my senses tingling in response to the music of the dance, should have been madly jealous as I saw Mariana among the dancers. The partner was not Andrade. He was too old, I reasoned—but I did not know—perhaps she had forgotten me, or, more cruel, perhaps she sought to use me as a foil to tantalize the artist the

while this partner might in reality be the one lover. A thousand mad thoughts surged in my brain, for the Spanish blood is jealous.

Then Dolores appeared in the doorway. So quietly as to seem almost an apparition—a phenomenon of the night as natural in the tropics and semi-tropical countries as the day mirage is to the desert. There was something wonderful about her in the moonlight, for she seemed changed as she entered the garden and passed down the stone walk, moving as noiselessly as those slow-moving rays of moonlight that drifted in among the flowers. By some transformation, for a moment that night, time turned back a quarter of a century for Dolores. Slowly she passed among the flowers. Plucking a red rose she

placed it among her whitening tresses that appeared jet black by moonlight. Her eyes flashed. She moved more proudly. She was again in spirit and appearance a belle of the ball—only for a moment—and the transformation ended. She was old Dolores again and the moon life had faded away. Grumbling to herself she complained as she saw me approaching.

“It is always this way when the house is full of young people. I have no quiet place to stay. When the dance is over they will probably come here.”

“Mariana is dancing,” I said. “Will you secretly tell her I am here? The ship for Spain leaves sooner than expected and this is the last night I will have at Capistrano.”

“Will you meet her here? When?” she asked.

“Tell her I will watch and meet her when she comes alone.”

Dolores started back to the house.

“Ah, he is the lover for her,” she muttered. “This artist! Bah!”

And again I knew Dolores liked me.

CHAPTER IV.

CHAPTER IV.



ROSA lacked the reserve and the dignity of Mariana. Mariana was tall and stately, with regular features and high coloring, and in all respects typically Spanish. Rosa, while similar, had the vivacity and abandon of the French disposition and was small and more of the appearance of the French women.

I watched the deserted garden for a while, and then as the door opened my heart beat wildly. It was Mariana!

No. The dance was over and it was only Rosa and De Mofras coming out into the night air.

“It is much nicer here,” said Rosa.

“If you say so,” the gallant Frenchman answered.

“You Frenchmen are always clever,” complimented Rosa. “Perhaps that is why France has had so many great leaders.”

“Perhaps,” said De Mofras, “and Louis Phillipe is the greatest of all.”

“Greater than Napoleon?” asked Rosa, amazed.

“Not so forcible, but more subtle—one who slips around the obstacles Napoleon would have sought to break.”

“And if he should succeed in making California and Mexico a part of his empire?”

Rosa's question was left incomplete, for another couple came to the doorway, but, seeing Rosa and her companion, stayed within.

"If we succeed I will have a high position," said De Mofras.

"This is a large country with very few subjects to rule," said Rosa, doubtfully.

"We will colonize. Besides, the fewer people the more lands for those who are here." The Frenchman was shrewd.

And here, unconsciously, I was spying upon the plans of conspiracy in which my rival, Andrade, and Senor Saucedo were so keenly interested, for the still night air carried their words perfectly to me.

"Do you believe the French can per-

suade the Republic to become a monarchy again?" asked Rosa.

"No doubt," he answered, confidently. "Mexico would be more easily conquered now than it was by Cortez. A small army would accomplish wonders. Spain cannot possibly hope to regain it. Mexico is already afraid of England and the States, both of whom have designs upon her, and the Mexican leaders would much prefer French rule to Anglo-Saxon domination."

"What a clever plan you have arranged," his admirer answered.

"And the best of it is that it will succeed," he said with enthusiasm. "Every Mission, rancho and village that I have visited seems favorable to our plans."

And here I had my suspicions confirmed.

“Father and Senor Andrade are,” admitted Rosa, “and so am I.”

“We cannot fail then,” said De Mofras, “and we will celebrate the conquest with our marriage. If successful, I am to receive a grant of land as large as the North of France.”

“But there would be no Paris in it!” teased Rosa—and she was charming when she teased.

“No, no Paris,” sighed De Mofras.

At this Rosa arched her brows and puckered her lips.

“Dufлот, why do you sigh for Paris when you are with me? Are the women of Paris so attractive that they make you sigh this far away?”

“Every Frenchman loves Paris as the Moslem loves Mecca,” discreetly rejoined De Mofras.

“And the women of Paris?” she asked.

“Some of them are very charming,” he answered.

“That is a dangerous admission, Monsieur de Mofras,” she said, loftily.

“I am no longer Dufлот,” he pleaded.

“Not while you sigh for the ladies of Paris.”

“They also have their disadvantages.”

“And I have,” she said, and pouted.

“I was not comparing them to you—you are beyond comparison,” he added, gallantly.

“Now, Dufлот,” she said, half smiling, “you are seeking to make amends.”

“I never intended to displease you,” he said, frankly.

“I may forgive you,” she said, com-

promisingly, "but first tell me of the disadvantages of these Parisian beauties."

From this speech De Mofras realized he had been disarmed by forgiveness and was now in more danger than ever.

"They are too clever," he answered, cautiously.

"Oh!" she said, disdainfully.

"And too nimble-witted," he continued. "Their conversation is a continual warfare, in which man is more than likely to be vanquished. Repartee is a poor fort for men to fight behind."

"What else?" demanded Rosa without pity.

"They are too complex in their manners. One needs the training of a lifetime to cope with their inherited routine"—he paused.

“Yes, and—?” insisted his fair inquisitor.

“They care more for fashion than learning, and, though clever, are conceited—beautiful, but artificial—polite, but hypocritical—in short, they try to become as unnatural as possible, but they are fascinating.” He paused.

“From your description they certainly have many disadvantages,” she said, demurely. “It would not be just to compare them with me,” she added, innocently. And De Mofras, unsuspectingly answered, “Certainly not.”

Then, having drawn him into the depths like a hunter misled by a wood nymph, she said, saucily:

“Of course not. I would be found simple where they are complex—plain where they have added the artificialities

of fashion—studied where they display the abandonment of intuition—and stupid where they are fascinating. Truly, Monsieur de Mofras, I fear if I was in France on one bank of the Seine and the ladies of Paris on the other—there would be no question as to which side of the river you would anchor your boat.”

De Mofras was puzzled.

“You do not choose to relieve me from embarrassment,” he pleaded, “but believe me—”

Rosa interrupted, asking, mischievously: “You humbly beg forgiveness?”

“I certainly do,” he answered, meekly.

“Then, Monsieur de Mofras, swear that you have not a single sweet-

heart in all the land of France," she commanded.

De Mofras smiled as he answered, "I have only one sweetheart, and I will bring the kingdom of France to her feet," referring to the contemplated conquest of California by that nation.

Having with this gallant speech purchased peace, and the dance having begun again, they entered the house and became part of the merrymaking within.

CHAPTER V.

CHAPTER V.



HERE are some incidents in one's life that, insignificant in themselves, because of later circumstances and happenings stand forth in the memory with remarkable prominence, and such a one occurred when Mariana and I met in that jasmine-scented rose garden the evening of the dance.

The simplicity and calmness of place and time formed a strange contrast to the life within, the dancers making a separate and oblivious world so short a distance from us. I had not long to

wait after Rosa and the Frenchman entered. Mariana stepped cautiously into the moonlight. Dolores had carried the message safely.

“Juan, Juan,” she called, guardedly. I hastened to meet her.

“Mariana, this is the last night,” was my greeting.

“Dolores has told me, but you will return,” she said.

“Yes,” I answered, “and when I return I will come here.”

Mariana paused mournfully and, looking far into the heavens as though she would fathom the future, murmured: “And I will be here, perchance—and you will return, perchance. Who knows in this uncertain world?”

“I will return,” I answered. “You

have said it—and a woman's mind is almost intuition."

We made our way to a secluded corner seat before she answered.

"I would it might be so, yet doubts prevail. You are going to a country whose women are most fascinating—to one of the most brilliant courts in the world."

"Why are you so fearful, with all your charms?" I asked, for never but once did she look fairer. Truly she was the beauty of San Juan—one of the most beautiful women in the world, as I knew later after I had traveled.

Her artlessness was supreme.

"Ah, we do not fear until we have something to lose, and I do not wish to lose you."

"You fear I will not be strong enough

to resist their charms?" I asked. "You must not do me an injustice."

"No. It is not your weakness, only mine I was considering," she answered. "I am not equal to them. I have only the training of this little Mission town."

"I fear only Andrade's influence with your father—and an opposition too strong for you to long resist," I answered.

"I hope and trust for the best. Do you not think it possible?" she asked, anxiously.

"I hope it is," I answered. Were I your opponent I know how quickly I would yield."

"If they were all like you," she murmured softly, "but they are not. There is only one Juan Fernandez and he is

mine, if some one in Spain does not steal him from me."

"They will not," I said, happily.

Then, abruptly changing her mood, she began:

"Here is a little book for you to read while you are away."

Receiving it from her hands, I asked, "Have you read it?"

"Yes," and then said archly, "Would you like to know its contents?"

I nodded a yes in answer.

"They are love sonnets," she replied, laughing. "You know you must begin to learn to love."

"Learn!" I said. "I have known how since first I met you."

She laughed carelessly. "Shall I read one?" she queried.

"No. Not here," I said. "It is too

dark with moonlight only lighting the page.”

“Ah, no,” she pleaded, sweetly; “my memory nearly recalls their lines and the moon will lend its magic to the words.”

She stood gracefully in the moonlight, and resting one hand lightly on my shoulder, and holding the book majestically with the other, read one of those rare old Portuguese love sonnets, which I could but inaccurately give in English. The charm of her sonorous tones, the witchery of her manner, and that rare magnetism of personality requisite to the success of all great actresses, made the lines doubly effective. As she completed I cried:

“Ah, what beauty of Spain could win me while I see you standing before me

—reading—in the memory of this night?”

She answered with a smile.

“If your love depends upon your ability to express it, you need no lessons, Juan,” she said.

And I did not. Love-making is as old as the world and requires no teaching.

The dance was nearly finished. Our meeting was almost at a close and the parting scene was then enacted.

“How I fear to leave you,” I sighed.

“No, no,” she answered. “A woman’s wiles may win against a man’s strong will, and I shall win. Have no fear, Juan. My father cannot refuse me.”

What courage one small sentence sometimes gives a mortal, and how long in Spain I lived in hope upon that one!

During that entire scene we seemed transported to another world—where fear, and all the annoyances of life on this planet were missing. Such is the power of Cupid when he chooses to exercise his prerogative.

The transformation of Dolores had lasted but a moment—ours was of scarcely longer duration—but the memory of that night will last forever.

We parted, and I left her watching in the moonlight until I was lost to view. And I doubt not that, heavy-hearted, she listened intently to hear the last echoing clatter of my steed's footsteps.

CHAPTER VI.

CHAPTER VI.



ANY times in the long years that have passed since that night have I risen, restless, from my couch, saddled my steed and ridden again at a mad gallop through the valley, trying in vain to live again those days when hope, at least, sustained my courage. The valley and the mountains alone remain unchanged. I have outlived my time. Even the Mission is in ruins. Much of the world have I seen in my travels, but it would be difficult to find a more beautiful valley. Its entire at-

IN THE SHADOW OF SAN JUAN

mosphere is suggestive of peace, rest and quietude. It is a great, smooth plain that matches in the summer the dull color of the adobe, and in the winter the shadowy green of velvet, stretching in undulating mounds in all directions until it reaches the encircling mountains on the one side and beyond the range of human sight to the sea on the other.

I have seen it in a thousand different moods. I have often seen the rugged base of that great range splashed with gigantic shadows of the snow-white, spotless clouds that cling and hover half way up the canyons, and above the clouds the bright sun flashing upon a series of snow-capped peaks, and all around, a great blue sea of immensity

engulfing the world—the matchless sky of California.

Again I have seen it when some strange alchemy of the air has touched the eastern peaks and bathed them first in painted torrents of red and yellow, gloriously bright, lighting each little canyon, its trees and all the scars of the days of the avalanche to view. And as the dying sun moved on, its rays, lingering, kissed the shadows with soft shades of pink that blended into lavender and then to purple in the deepest ravines. The sky, no longer blue, took on at north and south a somber color like the mingled white and gray of ashes. The hues of day faded one by one, the world slowly vanishing before the observer's gaze.

Slowly through the gloom of night

the eye catches the gleam of a star—yellow and motionless. Long as you watch it there is no movement—only an occasional disappearance as though some great night bird had passed before it. Higher, after a time, another star appears—a white star—and slowly, one by one, others appear. The yellow star was a light shining in some cabin half way up the range. How high the mountains seem at night! Then a faint glow dimly outlines the rugged peaks, and, silhouetted against a narrow mass of glowing, seething color, a giant pine stands sentinel over the valley. Quickly the color changes and the full moon, rising over the horizon, like a silent snow-storm, bathes the world in white.

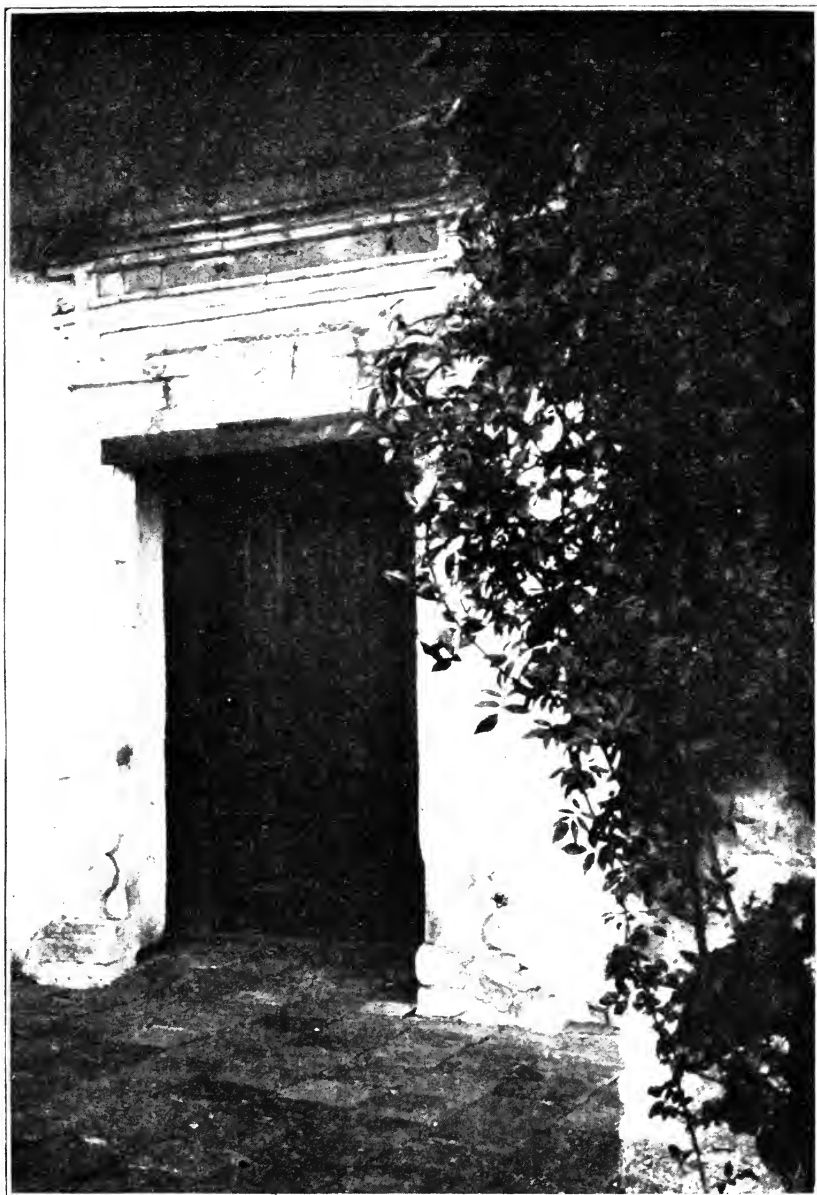
And on such a night I took my leave of Capistrano.



Door of the Chapel at Capistrano.

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And on such a night I took my leave of Capistrano.



CHAPTER VII.

CHAPTER VII.



THE next scenes I can only recount as they were told to me, in part, by Rosa, partly by Dólóres and by De Mof-ras, or by Mariana.

After I left, Padre Matteo, the Mission father for whom Mariana had an adoring respect, found her alone in the garden.

“Ah,” he said, shaking his finger roguishly at her, “I have found the runaway at last. It was always your habit when a mere child to lurk in some out of the way and hidden corner.”

There was no one so influential with

Mariana as Padre Mateo, nor would she listen to any advice until she had the sanction of his older experience. It was therefore with a feeling of great relief that she saw him approaching.

“Oh, padre,” she said as she rose and went to greet him, “I am more than glad you have come. You are the only one to whom I can look for advice. I know you can help me now. You must.”

It was the same trusting spirit she had always exhibited in her childhood and so unlike her reserved latter-day moods that the padre was happy.

“My Mariana must have no secrets from me,” he said graciously. “What is it?”

“No, Padre, I am the inquisitor,” she answered, and then, pausing blushing,

she asked, "Do you believe in love, padre?"

The padre paused and sought mentally the purpose of her question before answering. A hasty answer to the impetuous Mariana might be dangerous to her. Therefore, like the oracles of ancient Greece, he answered, evasively:

"I have grown to be somewhat of a philosopher in this new country and I have nearly concluded that sentiments do not exist—of any character—unless we in our own minds conclude that we need them. Thus, when in youth we long for the spiritual unknown we call that love—in old age, religion—and I have reached the latter stage."

Mariana was silent. Then she asked:

"Did you never believe in the other?"

“Certainly,” replied Padre Mateo, “or I could not have correctly answered your former question.”

Mariana sighed. From Padre Mateo she had hoped to obtain some solution to her problem and one in accordance with her desires.

“Padre, I love Juan Fernandez. Father will have me married to none but Senor Andrade. I cannot do it when I love Juan only, and it would not be right, would it, when I feel so?”

Here, indeed, was a difficult question for the padre to answer, in view of the different personalities connected with the decision. While Saucedo and Andrade were led by selfish desires, Padre Mateo saw only in Mariana's course a too strong liking for the physical charms of life in the child he had found

so richly endowed with the spiritual nature. In his goodness of heart he ascribed virtues to Saucedo and Andrade they only pretended to possess. Therefore he couched his speech carefully before he answered.

“It is not always, Mariana, that which we desire in this world that is best for us, nor what seems right to us when young that is right for us to do. Wisdom and control of desires come with age. Your father may consider matters you have neglected to consider. Andrade has learned the wisdom of experience. Young Fernandez, with all his attractions, has only the hasty, impetuous spirit of youth. The one has learned the benefits of religion—the other is tasting the forbidden fruits.”

“Ah, Padre Mateo,” she answered,

“you are failing me. I have come to you at last for advice upon a subject of which you know nothing. Old age does not always understand youth.”

The padre smiled at her reproof.

“Old age generally understands youth, my daughter, but youth rarely ever understands old age.”

Continuing, he added:

“No, my child, do not allow your desires to overcome your better judgment. Remember that we are all mortal and more likely to err than not. This is the test you must put to yourself—conscience—and in doing so, consider first if you have had any misgivings at the thought of disobeying your father’s advice. Have you not, deep in your heart, experienced such misgivings?”

“Of course, padre,” she answered.
“who would not?”

“And you must also consider justice. Suppose, my child, you were the parent and your child desired to act contrary to your wishes, when you were acting in your maturer judgment for her best interests? What would your emotions be? I cannot describe them, but that is your father’s position now. Harsh as he may seem, I have no doubt he believes he is acting for the best. This conscience, Mariana, is God’s guide that enables us to distinguish right from wrong, and you must follow it. The Church points out to us those broad principles that have been revealed and that its followers have learned are best.”

There was such nobility of thought in

his words and they seemed so convincing that Mariana could give no appropriate answer. She was lost in thought. Then, in a sudden outburst of uncontrollable emotion, she answered:

“Padre, sometimes it seems religion fails completely. It changes all our plans for happiness.”

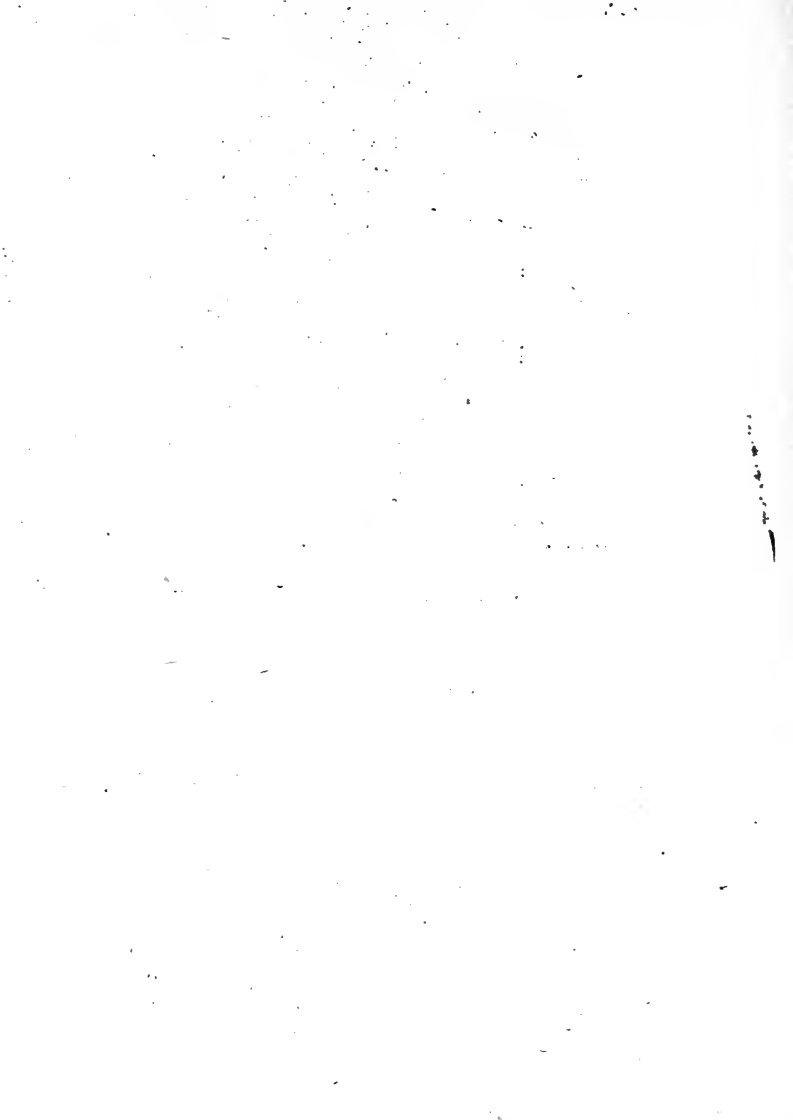
“True happiness lies in contentment,” answered the shocked adviser. “If we only appreciate fully the blessings we receive we have no time for complaint at what we, in our blindness, may consider misfortunes. You must remember we are only the children of God and must do His bidding willingly. Through your conscience He guides you, and that must resolve you—not your desires.”

The words of Padre Mateo were so portentous of the future that Mariana's despair was plainly shown in her features.

"We must all bear the cross, my child," he said, kindly.

And Mariana was silent.

CHAPTER VIII.



CHAPTER VIII.



WITH what strange contrasts life sometimes fits its scenes together! Scarcely had Padre Mateo concluded those ominous and, to Mariana, leaden words, when the dancers, throbbing with the joyous music of the dance, crowded their way into the garden, their gay costumes and merry laughter appearing in odd contrast to the previous scene. They failed even to see Mariana and Padre Mateo. They were bent upon a plan of merriment and Rosa was alone the object of interest.

De Mofras was pleading with her to dance one of the Old World dances, so different from the Spanish dances of the New Spain. And she, with laughing objections, was refusing. And now, added to his demands, was that of the entire party.

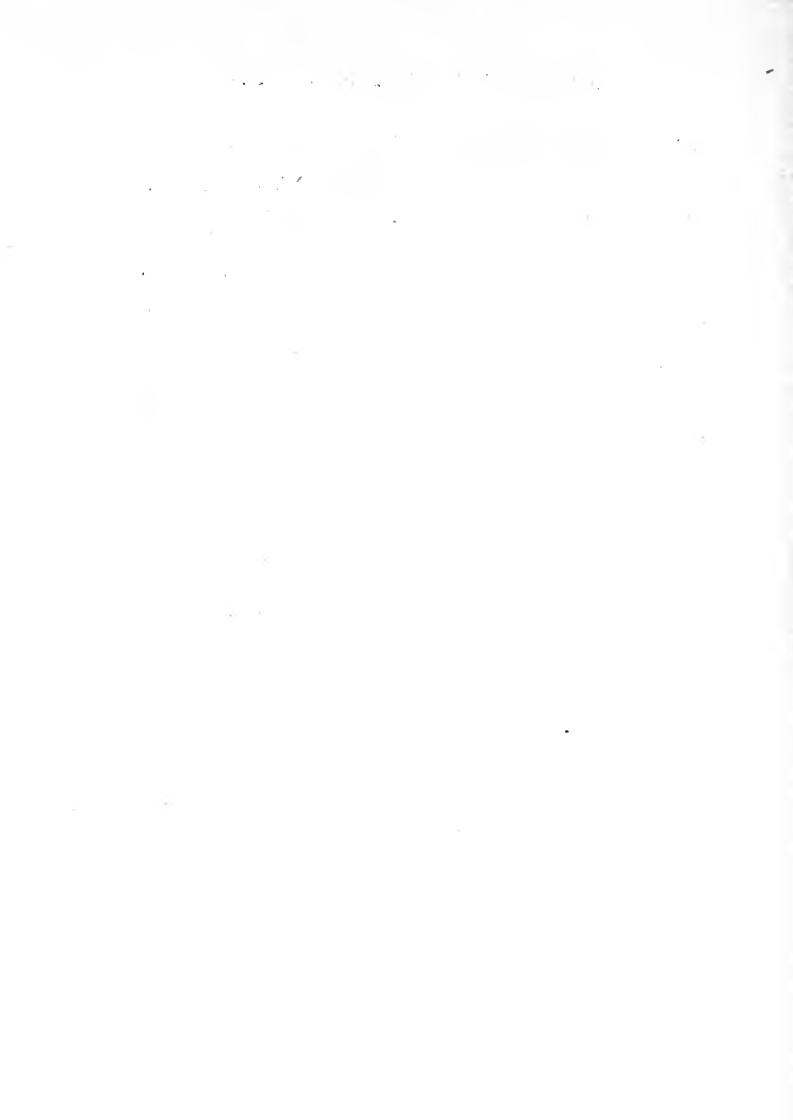
“Yes, yes,” they cried in unison, and some one hastened to call the musicians. They came out quickly and Rosa graciously consented.

There is something serpentine in the Spanish form that yields with ever-changing grace to every response the music demands, and Rosa was a mistress of her art. Often have I seen her dance, but it seems that on that night, with De Mofras, her lover, present, she surpassed herself. Perhaps the beauty of the night added to the effect, and the

languorous odors from the near-by garden. At all events there was an insistent demand for another dance, and once again she captivated them with her skill, and, ending the Seguidilla in one grand, tempestuous figure, she rushed, laughing into the ballroom, and, standing imperiously within the doorway, cried:

“Now we all dance.”

And with their characteristic Spanish enthusiasm they re-entered and the dance began again.



CHAPTER IX.

CHAPTER IX.



WHILE Rosa danced Mariana remained quietly in the background. After the re-entrance of the dancers, however, the watchful Saucedá noticed her absence and entered the garden in search of her. He paused in the doorway, but she did not reveal her presence. The father peered anxiously into the shadows and then locating her stepped quickly to her place of concealment. He spoke cautiously, for anger was not the proper mood for this interview.

“Not dancing, Mariana?” he asked.

“No,” she answered quietly and without anger.

“Thinking of Fernandez?” he inquired, guardedly.

“That is a useless question, father,” she said sadly, in a tone that suggested the interview would be as useless.

“My child, I expect you to do as I have advised you.”

His tone was so conciliatory and different from his accustomed one that courage flashed in Mariana’s eyes and she was again hopeful. She imagined that he had begun to regret his harsh commands, and plead her cause with fervor.

“Then to be poor is not to be free in love! I believed it was only among the

nobility that marriage for rank and wealth was necessary.”

“Not where the poor have been raised as have my daughters,” Saucedá answered, “where a parent has deprived himself to take pride in his children. I have given you everything in my power—have reared you all these years—and you do not consider that I have any right to plan as to your future. You call my plans of marriage dictation. No, I have allowed you too much freedom, have argued with you too often, and because I have reasoned with you, you forget that my word is and should be authority.”

“Am I not old enough to be reasoned with?” she asked, earnestly. “Surely some time you would wish to be relieved

of responsibility for my actions. And has not that time arrived?"

Sauceda did not desire to argue.

"There is only one course open to you, Mariana. It is useless to repeat to you what you already know—that your training has not been one calculated to fit you in this New World, at least, so you can support yourself. At the present time this Fernandez cannot marry. He is too poor. I am no longer young, and it is my duty to see my children settled in life before it is too late. Therefore I intend you shall marry Andrade, and you must obey me. You were happy before you met this Fernandez and you can forget him and be happy again. Much of our pleasure consists in putting out of our thoughts that which is unpleasant."

“No, one cannot do those things,” said Mariana, mournfully. “You cannot turn the wine back into grapes.”

This was unanswerable, so Saucedo said harshly, “We will have no more argument on the subject. You can and must obey my command.”

Mariana likewise became more positive.

“Senor Andrade has grown old in the pursuit of pleasure,” she said. “He lives in the memory of the past, and this barnacle of society is what you ask me to love. You would chain me, young and happy, to this old and discontented man. When you ask all this I cannot believe you are thinking of my happiness.”

“You forget that I am your father,” reprimanded Saucedo.

The reply of Mariana was a rebuke that angered him to the extreme of endurance.

“No, but I fear you are forgetting I am your daughter when you so ruin my future. A shepherd who deserts his flock is no longer their shepherd and a father who deserts his children is no longer their father.”

“We will soon know whether that is true or not and what the relationship of daughter means,” he cried. It was no longer a rational consideration of the difficulty between them, but it had grown through anger to become a conflict of personalities wherein the father at all costs and by any means necessary, intended to conquer the daughter. And she, less angry, and not revengeful,

sought only to withstand the force of his indignation.

"I would die before I would marry Andrade," she said, firmly.

Sauceda sneered. "It is only cowards who prefer death under such conditions, and one who chooses death to such a marriage can easily be forced into submission."

"No. We, who are Spanish, break, but we do not bend. Have you lived all these years and so fail to know my nature?"

"You have two natures," he answered. "The one, your inherited Spanish temperament—the other has been acquired from the Padre's teachings. I know you better than you know yourself. If you destroy the mortal you lose also the immortal. The Church is

the wall that holds you from yourself. The future is more to be feared than the present. The one you can endure—the other is everlasting.”

Well informed was he of Mariana's nature, and well did he know how deeply those words burned into her mind. In final despair she cried:

“Then let me become a part of that Church. I can forget to love more easily than I can learn to pretend to love.”

“No. Have I not shown you that I know your nature better than you yourself know it? My demands are reasonable and just, and you must obey them.” And Saucedá turned to go.

“Father,” she cried, holding him back, “who was my mother? Was she chosen for you because of your parents' wishes, or did you love her?”

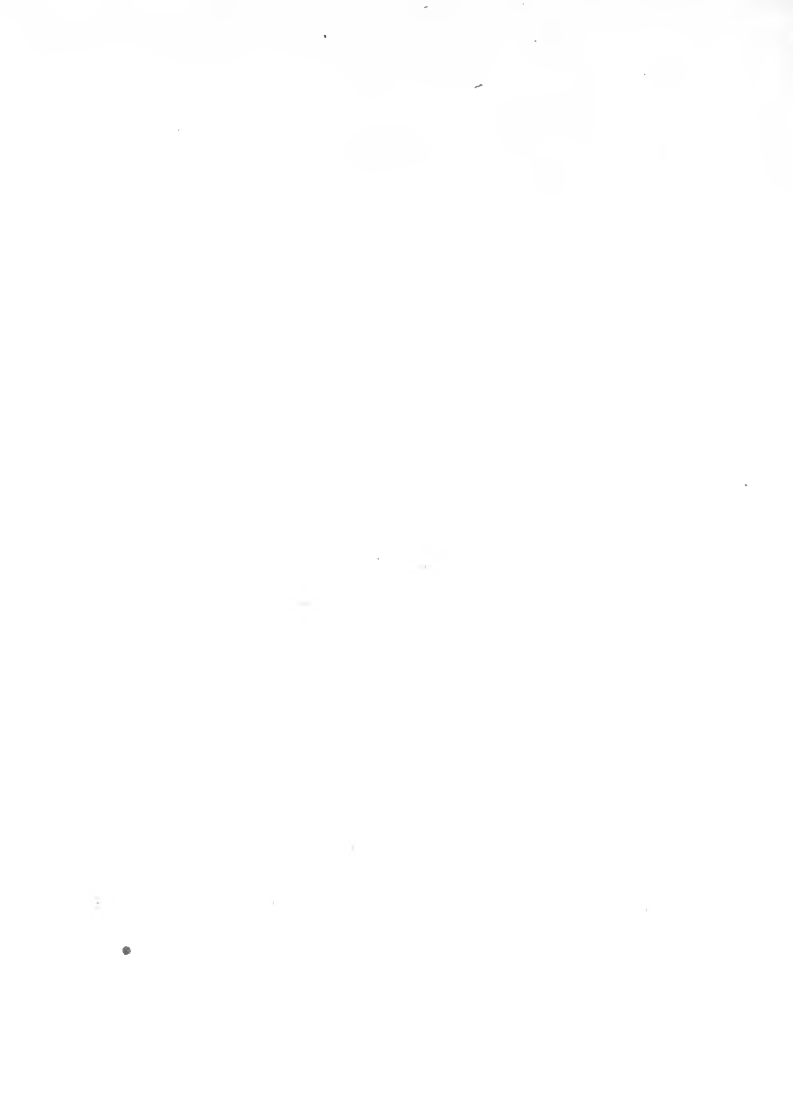
"I thought I loved her," he answered, "and I suppose I did then, but there is only one time for loving, as there is but one season for the flowers to bloom."

"Here they bloom always," said Mariana, a pathos in her tones that would have won a heart less harsh than Saucedá's.

"So they do," he answered, "and because we have them always they become common and we tire of them. I will hear no more. When Senor Andrade asks you, there must be but one answer. Do you understand?"

And turning on his heel he walked abruptly away.

CHAPTER X.



CHAPTER X.



ARIANA remained there, knowing that Andrade must come, and knowing that she must face him.

She had not long to wait. Slipping quietly from behind the vines that covered one side of the patio, Andrade advanced and spoke with a forced tone of indifference.

“This is our dance, Mariana; have you forgotten?”

“No,” she answered. “Will you do me the favor of staying here?” And

then, in uncompromising manner, continued: "I desire to talk with you."

"What have you to say?" asked Andrade, impatiently, seeking by an abrupt address to dishearten her, a tactic often employed by the old in dealing with inexperienced young.

Mariana rose, even his presence being distasteful to her, and standing a short distance from him, in a mood not far from disdainful, demanded, "Will it not hurt your pride to obtain by force a marriage you cannot gain by reason of your own personality?"

Andrade was flattered. She admitted conquest?

"No," he answered. "I am like a hunter who finds the zest of hunting in the eager chase. I may find a way to attract you later."

"If you are so clever why have you not already found a way? No. You have spoken to my father and he has agreed. I have not," was Mariana's retort. "Why are you so insistent? Is it only because I am unwilling?"

"No," he answered. "Also because you are beautiful."

A gleam of hope leaped into her eyes.

"Beauty is easily destroyed. I would destroy mine if by so doing I could cause you to forget me."

Andrade laughed carelessly. "You told your father you would die before you would marry me. The same objections appear here. Have you any greater right to destroy your beauty than your life?"

The contempt of Mariana knew no bounds as she realized that Andrade had

been a hidden listener during the controversy with her father.

“Senor!” she said with amazement. “I may have attributed to you wrongly faults you do not possess, but I did at least believe you to be a gentleman. You are not willing to fight fairly. You have stooped to employ deceit, falsehood and now, even spying, to gain the object of your ambition.”

Andrade was speechless before her words of indignation. She continued:

“Now, just at the time when I feel everything slipping away before me—every hope upon which I have placed my confidence—when no other help seems to avail me, for nature has not made me independent, you so degrade yourself by the methods you have employed that my failing courage is revived, and, fear-

less of all the consequences, I give you my answer. No."

Then, the full majesty of her outraged feelings showing in her actions, she left Andrade standing in the garden and hid herself in her own room. A few minutes later, Dolores, entering, saw her standing by the window that looked to the sea, the last of the old life passing away as she murmured:

"I feel as though life was ended. Juan, the ship that is carrying you to Spain cannot separate us so quickly as the simple turning of words."

And she swooned away before Dolores could reach her.

CHAPTER XI.

CHAPTER XI.



IT was to be expected that Mariana would not yield without a struggle, nor did Andrade hope to effect his purpose in one or even two such interviews. Patiently he and Saucedá pursued their game, for with their knowledge of human nature they knew that eventually she must yield. Her environment, her nature, her training—and all the circumstances attending—made it impossible for her to accept any other solution than the one they offered, unless she could in some way persuade either

Andrade or her father to change their intentions. Therein lay her only hope. In every way during the long months that followed this eventful evening the question was broached and forced upon her. At last Andrade, who, though not clever, was cunning, after he had at great length catalogued his list of vices and faults as he judged Mariana saw them, pretended to throw himself upon her mercy and sought her pity for his weaknesses, adding that with her help he might reform—that his despair at being unable to gain her admiration and love was the prime cause of all his faults—and that she could be his guardian angel and save his soul.

His scheme was Machiavelian and the artifice, while not sufficient of itself, was the guiding wedge, so that finally, un-

able longer to resist the opposition and commands of her father, she was persuaded that doubtless there was some unknown purpose moving the forces that encompassed her. The shadow of San Juan was moving closer and she was chilled in spirit. Unable to do otherwise, she yielded.

How different seemed the world to each of us a few days after that night I left her. She had begun to know the truth, to realize that what did finally happen was inevitable. And if she thought of me it was with sadness and regret. I at the same time was sailing out of sight of the land from which I was absent nearly three years. All was hopeful with me, for it is the nature of youth to be hopeful. The splashing of the waves, the bright flashing gleam of

sunlight on the water, the peaceful mountains in the background and the glorious sky, flawless as a rare turquoise, above, all seemed part of a great symphony of hope that urged me on to Spain—to success and to happiness. Long I watched the shore until the last familiar object was lost to view—even the mountains could be no longer seen, only a long, slender line of golden yellow that told where, in the limitless Pacific, the shores of California lay. For in those days the golden poppies bloomed from sea to mountains and at that season of the year—in all their glory—the copas de oros, or cups of gold, painted the land with such brilliant color that it could be seen at sea miles further than at other months.

CHAPTER XII.

CHAPTER XII.



THREE years passed and in that time happened many details of this family history. Mariana had yielded to influence and married Andrade, and after the death of Saucedo they removed to San Diego. The French plans of Empire had come to naught, and Rosa was to this time single, though De Mofras paid court in a half-hearted way.

Mariana's existence during this period was a series of detailed annoyances that dazed her spirit, for Andrade was

almost constantly drunk and almost constantly brutal. Her appearance and bearing, therefore, was far different from what it had been in those happier days, and she had more the appearance of one who submits to sorrow as a portion of human existence sent for a purpose. Rosa was her constant companion and sole consolation, for Padre Mateo was no longer near her. Far removed as she was from her beloved Mission, the shadow of San Juan was still upon her and was to be always present.

Having completed my business in Spain and gained my estates, and being then free to return and shape my own destiny, I sailed for California. During this long period I heard no word from Mariana, for my letters to her

were intercepted and she knew not where to reach me.

In those days the ships carried not only passengers but cargo, and we arrived in the beautiful harbor of San Diego prepared for a stay of several days to unload and take on supplies.

I had planned to ride to Capistrano and thus avoid the delay, but at San Diego the fame of Andrade's entertaining was on every tongue, and I learned for the first time, also, of the marriage.

With what force were my hopes shattered and the sunniest sky in the world was not bright to me. That same night Andrade was giving the fifth in a series of famous banquets to some of his new found friends,—Ricardo Rafael, Ramon Ruiz and Miguel Enriquez, and the ever-present Frenchman, De Mofras.

For ladies, Miguel's sister, Rachel Enriquez; Concepcion Flores and Mercedes Granada—in all a very brilliant company of pleasure-lovers.

I did not know that I should figure at that dinner when first I heard of it, nor did I know that some day I would know so well all of its details, but I learned them later from De Mofras.

The dinner opened gayly, and though long, seemed much too short to the guests, as evidenced by Rachel's remark:

“What a pity so fine a banquet should be so nearly at an end!”

Her brother spoke with amusing sarcasm of his petite and more than usually dainty sister. “Senor Andrade, may Rachel have another duck? She always

brings capacity enough for two diners."

"Miguel!" And Rachel pouted reproachfully.

"The best part of the dinner is here now," spoke up Ramon Ruiz.

Rafael was interested.

"The wine?" he asked.

"Yes. Where did you get it?" asked Ruiz, draining his glass with delight.

Andrade paused, drained his glass, and then smiled.

"My wife had the good fortune to be the daughter of Saucedá, a wine maker at Capistrano. The wine was part of the estate when he died. As he often said, he knew his business."

Ruiz drained another glass.

"He certainly did," he answered, ap-

provingly. "Did you marry Senora Andrade with a view to the wine?"

"Certainly," chuckled Andrade.

There was a pause after that remark, interrupted by Mercedes Granada.

"It is unfortunate Senora did not attend the banquet."

"Yes," answered Rachel Enriquez. "Particularly since it has taken her charming sister, Senorita Rosa, from Monsieur's presence."

The Frenchman had consumed enough wine to accept any remark in good humor, so he answered:

"You have temporarily been capable of taking her place." He was ever ready-witted.

Rachel looked at him demurely.

"You are very fickle, Monsieur de Mofras, a pretty face has the same ef-

fect upon your wit as a ray of light has upon the wine in this glass." And she held the shining glass of red wine before her.

"Senorita Rachel lays claim to a pretty face, Andrade. What is your judgment?" asked Ramon Ruiz.

"Quite right. Quite right. I have none other than pretty faces at my festive board," answered the host.

Concepcion Flores looked pacified. "It is well you added that, Senor Andrade," she said. "Senorita Mercedes and I were casting jealous glances at Rachel."

Andrade answered with gusto:

"You are as beautiful a trio as the three goddesses whom Paris was called upon to judge."

This speech, conveying a veiled insult

to Senora Andrade, surprised Ricardo Rafael, and he hastened to remark :

“Has Senor forgotten his wife? Has not Senora Andrade some claim to beauty?”

“Perhaps she is growing old,” suggested Concepcion Flores with the natural temper of a woman referring to one she dislikes. Mariana had no liking for these entertainments where all so forgot their better natures as to become boisterously drunk, and, gilded as they were with clever speech and brilliant surroundings, there was nothing about them that could appeal or attract, for she could see only too well in the features of Andrade the result of his long life of dissipation and excitement. And it was partly with a spirit of aggravation that Andrade was making so

great a display of his hospitality, knowing its effect on Mariana. But evil as the effects of such a life might have been on Andrade, the continual unhappiness of her condition worked far more havoc on Mariana, for the mental illnesses are far quicker in their destruction than the physical, because in the latter strength of mind may effect a cure, but in the former the body, deprived of its guiding power, soon fails. Mariana had changed greatly. Not that she was less beautiful, but her beauty was of another character. The two natures her father had ascribed to her were transposed. Where once the youthful fire of Spanish ancestry was uppermost, now that other nature, acquired by training and from the Mission, held sway. She was not less beautiful except

to those whose standard of beauty was physical. That this was true was evidenced by Andrade's remark:

"I have ceased trying to worship a living saint and fulfill her expectations."

Mercedes Granada made a gesture of finality.

"There, Senor Andrade, you have given the reason for your wife's loss of beauty. To be good is to be homely. Not that one should be wholly bad—but a little wickedness is always an attraction."

She paused and then asked:

"Is Senora always at her prayers, Senor? Is there no way you can persuade her to entertain us?"

"We do not care to hear her read from religious works," said Concepcion

Flores, looking bored and shrugging her shoulders.

Andrade smiled diplomatically before replying.

"I have some books in my library that could scarcely be called religious," he said.

At this remark, far from being listless, she was greatly interested, and said:

"Then let us put that theory Mercedes has just presented into practice, and see if a touch of wickedness can make Senora Andrade attractive."

Miguel Enriquez was not so drunk nor so brutal as the others, and he interceded with Andrade.

"But Senora is not well. You do not mean to show a lack of sympathy?"

Concepcion laughed heartily at the

reproof, and looked at him with good-natured contempt.

“Ah, Miguel,” she said, “we all know how convenient it is at times to be ill. Senora Andrade, doubtless, is no exception.”

“It will probably make her show her temper,” said Ramon Ruiz with glee. They were all in the plot now. It is as natural to mortal greed to injure and destroy that which surpasses it as it is for the higher nature to seek to uplift and draw unto itself the lower. Andrade, though he fretted under the restraint Mariana’s nature seemed to impose upon him, and notwithstanding he even carried to the extreme limit the enjoyment of his disapproved pleasures, had days when from reaction his nature was completely changed. At these times

he saw and appreciated the qualities he now sought to ridicule in his wife. Therefore he not only did not care to force matters to so decided an issue, but he feared that her superior nature would enable her to prevail in the contest, and he was dubious.

“No,” he answered. “She has every attribute of the saint save one—for she still lives. Her manner is most exasperating. She will doubtless prove to be a very dull entertainer.”

Mercedes Granada did not intend the plot to fail.

“She will not be uninteresting if you manage her rightly, Senor. Find a book and then call your saintly wife to read. We are growing impatient.”

Ramon Ruiz protested also.

"Shall I help you to decide?" he asked.

At the thought of anyone being able to suggest to this master of the disagreeable anything more awful than he himself could choose, Concepcion Flores became hilarious with amusement. Then, controlling herself, she said:

"No. His taste is sufficiently villainous. What have you decided upon, Senor Andrade?"

"You will look among the French authors, Senor?" suggested De Mofras.

Andrade rose. "A clever guess," he said. "What shall it be, Senorita Mercedes?" And the host paused unsteadily.

Senorita Mercedes Granada laughed mischievously as she answered:

"Paul and Virginia, Senor?"

At her reference to this gem of innocence all the guests laughed. The demure manner in which she said it caused them to believe for the moment she spoke seriously.

“That is not new,” answered Andrade. We must have a classic. Suppose it is—” and he paused as he moved toward the bookcase.

Mercedes Granada was impatient.

“What is it, Senor? Why do you tantalize us? Because you enjoy that privilege with Senora Andrade you must not conclude we will be so good-natured.”

Andrade did not respond, and Concepcion Flores pouted.

Turning from the case, Andrade held before him a book. “Manon Lescaut,” he said, “and unexpurgated.”

There was a pause. Even that blase body was shocked.

“Would we dare to listen to that?” asked Concepcion Flores, timidly.

Their modesty lasted but a moment and a wave of laughter dispelled the embarrassment.

“Senorita Concepcion considers a little goodness an attraction,” said De Mofras. “She is not like Mercedes.”

“No,” retorted the latter. “And yet I remember that I hesitated to read that book though I was locked tightly in my room with all my draperies tightly drawn. But I read it—and if Senora Andrade consents to read from it, we certainly can listen, for we do not pretend to the saintliness of Senora.”

“She may not know enough concern-

ing the book to refuse," suggested De Mofras.

"Ignorance is not always innocence, however," said Rachel Enriquez with considerable spirit.

De Mofras laughed carelessly before taking another glass of wine. "You women," he said, "take the same pleasure in tormenting another woman and tearing her reputation to pieces that a man takes in the hunt. You infer, it would seem, that Senora's piety is all pretence."

"Yes," she answered. "But we use more delicate weapons. Some of our most beautiful phrases are only jeweled daggers."

Ramon Ruiz interrupted. "We are about to witness a family battle," he said. "Gentlemen, let us see how able

a general Andrade is in his own household."

"You misunderstand me," said Andrade. "I have not had a refusal from Senora. In fact, I have not commanded her to be present. Should I do so she would not refuse. I did not compel her because I was assured her presence would mar the pleasure of the evening."

"Confidence is always supreme before a fall, Senor," said Concepcion Flores, tauntingly. "You have not commanded her presence. Is it because you fear she will not come?"

"No," he answered, and rang for Pedro. Upon the entry of that dignitary of the household, he thundered out:

"Call Senora Andrade, and tell her I command her immediate presence—without fail."

There was a stifling air of suppressed excitement over the company as Pedro left to execute Andrade's command. It was that element of doubt that doubly interests one in the result of such conflicts.

Concepcion Flores voiced one of her mental queries and asked:

"Why do you continue to live with Senora when you so dislike her, Senor?"

Andrade's lips turned scornfully.

"Because I like to annoy her," he replied. "Divorces are not easily obtained—and besides I like to punish her because she has no affection for me. I expect her younger admirer to return from Spain soon and I have no doubt he will find her. Then I shall have my fun with Senora Andrade. Ha, ha, ha, ha.

I shall find a way to make her miserable then—far more miserable than I have thus far made her. The slightest indiscretion on her part, or his, will give me the opportunity.”

He was interrupted by the entry of Pedro.

Had Senora refused to come?

“What is it?” shouted Andrade with anger as he saw Pedro returning alone.

“Senora will be here presently,” answered Pedro, and a gentleman has asked to see Senora Andrade.”

A puzzled look came over the crafty host's face, and then he asked: “What sort of a man is he?”

“Young and handsome and much too European to have long been here.”

“She is coming here,” said Andrade.
“Usher him in.”

Andrade became gay, excited. His joy, like that of Nero, was greatest when it had for its object the misery of others.

“Doubtless this is her young admirer,” he cried. “And if that be true, he is just in time for the first act of this family drama, and, who knows, may himself appear in the second act.”

His surmise was indeed correct. As he finished that sentence, I, Juan Fernandez, the rival, entered. I had asked for Senora Andrade, so, turning to Pedro, I said:

“I asked for Senora Andrade.”

Andrade answered me. Coming cordially over, he greeted me graciously.

“Ah, my good friend Fernandez. We will be friends now, I trust. You have returned from Spain in excellent health, I see.”

"Yes," I answered, trying to fathom the purpose of his good humor.

"Senora will be delighted to see you," he said. "I wish you to surprise her. You will be kind enough to hide behind that screen until I call for you? Senora is coming to read for us presently."

I still wondered that he was so friendly, but I felt it best to acquiesce apparently, and I retired behind the screen where I could see, but, myself, be unseen.

"Ah, there is Senora," whispered Mercedes Granada, the compelling majesty of Mariana's presence having for the moment mastered the company. Slowly she entered, Rosa following. Pale, dignified, she seemed more a statue than a mortal, and one could not but feel the spiritual presence she pos-

sessed, so lacking in the other members of that company. They, too, felt it, without realizing or admitting it, except tacitly.

Mariana broke the silence.

“You sent for me, Senor?”

When she spoke Andrade was himself again.

“You were too ill to come before,” he said, savagely. “You seem able to appear now.”

Mariana answered quietly. “You did not insist before. I have come now because you commanded.”

“You have been praying?” sneered Andrade.

Controlling her feelings, she asked again:

“Why have you sent for me?”

“To meet my guests as the wife of their host,” was the answer.

She spoke without feeling, either of anger or prejudice.

“Those whom I have met I do not need to meet. The others I do not care to meet.”

It was not strange that so gentle a speech should be misunderstood and cause such surprise to the guests, who showed it plainly.

“Indeed,” ventured Mercedes Granada, with anger, “if you do not entertain your husband, you have no occasion to object to our presence.”

“I did not say that. You failed to understand me.”

“I did not send for you to insult my guests,” shouted Andrade, hoarsely.

"I have told your guests they misconstrued my words," said Mariana.

"What did you intend by your remarks, then?" demanded Andrade.

"This is embarrassing," said Ramon Ruiz. "Senor is having a quarrelsome spell."

"He often has when he is drunk," whispered Mercedes Granada, replying.

Mariana answered, "I meant I did not care to meet any one tonight."

Andrade flushed. "None of your insults, Senora. How about one Juan Fernandez?"

His sarcasm was not so strong as her rebuke when she answered:

"I am your wife, Senor. It is you who insult me."

Andrade laughed, a hysterical, meaningless laugh.

“You have called me,” pleaded Mariana. “Why? Only to laugh at me?”

Andrade paused. “No. You are too interesting for that. I have been speaking your praises and my guests would have me prove them. Read to us.”

Mariana passed over to a low platform at the side of the room and then asked, “What have you selected?”

“Something new—that you have never seen before—or, if you have, you should not have seen,” Andrade said, with covert meaning.

“The author?” inquired Mariana.

“A great Frenchman.” Then, handing her the book, he said, “I have marked the beginning of the selection.”

Mariana received it, looked at the title—paused—and then, in pained surprise, spoke almost to herself:

“Manon Lescaut!”

Andrade was silent. So also was the company.

“Manon Lescaut!” she repeated, louder. “You have given me the wrong book, Senor.” And she handed it to him, but he motioned it back.

“No. That is the right one,” he said, coldly.

“Surely you do not wish me to read from this?” she said.

“I do,” he answered.

With a gesture of despair she pleaded with him. “You must excuse me.”

“Your abilities are not equal to the part?” sneered Andrade. “I was of the opinion you could read anything.”

“It is not that,” she answered, sadly.

“You have supreme confidence in your talent, then?” he demanded.

“No; but I cannot read from *Manon Lescaut*. You know what that book is.”

Andrade's face lighted up with cynical glee at this unexpected answer, and then he asked:

“How do you know what that book is? You are not so saintly and innocent as you have pretended.”

Mariana paused, and then spoke quietly.

“I do not know its contents, but I do know, *Senor Andrade*, that it has been said that the woman who can read through one chapter of that book without blushing is utterly lost. Do not ask me, I implore you.”

Andrade smiled harshly.

“You have religious scruples, eh? A fine creed you have. When you have a notion to do a thing, all right; when

you do not, it does not conform to your religion. You have certainly a very convenient belief, Senora Andrade."

"It does not change," she answered.

"Then you do!" and he hurled the accusation at her.

Mariana started. "How, Senor?" she asked.

"You did not promise to love, cherish and obey me?" he said.

"I did, Senor," she answered.

"And yet you refuse to obey now. I asked you to read. These ladies have requested this selection and if they can listen to it, you can read it. I expect you to read."

Mariana trembled. Then, partially regaining her courage, she picked up the book as though to read, and then, courage failing, put it down.

"No, no," she said. "I cannot read this. You have never gone so far before, Senor—asked quite so great a humiliation. Have you no kindness? To what can I apeal for mercy?"

A light wave of sympathy passed over the guests, but was stopped by Andrade's sarcastic and bitter reply.

"You called me a barnacle of society, once, Senora," he said, bitterly. "Can you conceive of mercy in a barnacle of society? You can appeal for mercy from Andrade drunk to Andrade sober, but Emiliano Andrade is never sober."

"Why do you try to make my life so miserable?" she asked, piteously.

"Could you forget this Juan Fernandez it need not be so miserable," he answered.

Her eyes flashed with a suppressed emotion.

"You would have me forget," she began, and then, realizing the futility of argument, she became the suppliant.

"Senor," she said, simply, and there were tears in the very intonation of the word.

"Read!" said he, fiercely.

Then Rosa spoke. She was always the quiet, peaceful guardian of Mariana in those later years.

"I will read it for her," she said.

Mariana spoke bravely.

"No. If Senor will not release me, then I appeal to his guests."

Mercedes Granada tossed her head contemptuously and then whispered loudly to her partner, "Is she not a child?"

Concepcion Flores answered more openly.

"If you wish your husband to humor you, you must please him."

Andrade interrupted. "You are clever, Senora," he said, "but you are not to win so easily. I am the court of last resort."

Mariana, now thoroughly aroused, faced them haughtily, and answered:

"By what irony of fate has the wine my father made so hardened your hearts to kindness! I understand. When Mexico left the rule of Spain, it seems her men renounced their Spanish chivalry, and there is at least one Frenchman who cannot boast of his respect for womanhood. I will not read from that book," and she hurled it to the floor as she spoke. "I am not refusing to obey my

husband, but I refuse to follow the dictates of his drunken mind."

De Mofras, his French pride hurt, protested.

"He is right," said Rosa, and nothing could have reproached him more.

The anger of Andrade was terrible. He rushed forward with the intention of striking Mariana, but, realizing his purpose, I intercepted him and held him back. For some unaccountable reason I had until that moment been powerless to interfere.

"Senor, where are your vows?" I asked.

The guests arose in confusion, in the midst of which I heard Mariana exclaim:

"Juan! You here!"

Turning, I saw her, pale and ex-

hausted, retiring from the room, carefully supported by Rosa and Pedro.

Andrade lost all control of himself and stammered apology after apology in his drunken way, and, leaving him in the chair into which he had fallen, I left, unnoticed, in the excitement.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHAPTER XIII.



AFTER the incidents just related I retraced my steps back to the plaza of San Diego, to weigh over the events of the evening and determine my course. Perhaps my best plan would have been to have ridden boldly out of San Diego and blotted out a past I could not alter, but something irresistible weighed upon me and I returned, determined to see Mariana alone.

The guests were drunk, I reasoned, and it would be easy. To no purpose, perhaps—at least none that my con-

science would allow—yet I could not bring myself to do other than obey that impulse, and I returned.

It was a moonlight night, but I scarcely noticed that. I could have found my way blindly through the depths of darkness that night, for Mariana was my guiding star.

Again I saw the lights in the Andrade banquet room. And beyond on the other side of the large patio a faint light betokened Mariana's presence. I entered the patio and called her softly—a low signal she remembered well, for after a moment she came out alone.

“Oh, Juan,” she said. “Your old call. They are drunk in there, but they might find you here. Why have you come?”

"Your heart can tell you why," I answered.

"Perhaps it could have once," she said, sadly.

"Not now, Mariana?" I asked. "I had hoped this marriage was forced upon you."

"It was," she answered; "and now I am the wife of Senor Andrade."

I answered with a droop of my head. It was hard in those days to look upon Mariana as anything but a saint, except when I became restless at my position.

"I know that," I answered. "I have only come to learn the truth."

"To what purpose, my friend?" she asked.

"I must know the truth," I cried. "In the past I have been forced to yield up, one by one, all of my ideals to the cold

abyss of truth—and I must know if this one is to follow.”

“And if I told you the truth?” she asked.

“I will go,” I answered. “There are some things past changing.”

“I have no right to tell you,” she answered with a shudder. “Even my tongue is bound.”

Perhaps I misunderstood her mood, the exact intent of her words, for I answered hoarsely:

“If you dare not tell me, I shall believe you no longer care for me; that your love was only a pretended passion—that love is, in fact, a fiction of man’s mind.”

How totally different from mine was her mind and attitude toward life was

shown in the pained expression in Mariana's features.

"Do not say that, Juan," she pleaded. "I do love you, though I have no right to. But I am only a woman, with a woman's weakness. You should have remembered that and not come. They have held me by bonds stronger than life itself, but I do not complain, for it may be best. The Faith to which I have always looked for help has proved the barrier. San Juan, in whose shadow I was born, still keeps watch over me, and I try to think all is for the best."

And the tears she strove to control could not be entirely hidden.

"Yes," I answered, hotly. "The shadow of San Juan. It has ever been the policy of religion to cast its shadow upon men's acts. If it dared, it would

eliminate all pleasure from the face of the earth."

"No," she said, intensely; "it only eliminates that pleasure which is not worth the price—where the consequences are out of proportion to the act."

"And is ours such a case?" I asked.

"We dare not question the purpose of life," she answered, nobly. "How good Heaven has been to you that it has not cowed you with its power!"

"I have felt its lack of power," I replied. "Can you say there is a God that permits the misery and cruelty we see on every hand? A God that makes Andrade rich and Juan Fernandez poor—that makes him of high rank and I to bear a name almost dishonored—a God that makes him happy and me miserable

—you, too, miserable, Mariana? And yet you believe.”

“I believe,” said Mariana, “because I would be lost without a guide.”

She answered simply, without affectation. That was the spirit of life in those days.

“Everything worth having has some penalty to make it worth the while. We must pay the toll of our happiness.”

“What toll pays Andrade?” I asked.

“If you knew him, you would pity him,” she answered. “Perhaps my pity for him has had much to do with my forbearance.”

Ah, I was miserably jealous, and my doubt made me weigh each word to find its value. “You pity him?” I asked. “Perhaps you pity me. Is it that you have been disillusioned and no longer

believe in love—but, pitying, will not enlighten me?”

“No,” she answered. “Pity and love are not alike. The one is nothing and the other—everything.”

“You see I am jealous,” I said. “I can believe nothing. If it was not love that won you, perhaps it was pity. If not pity, fear. Perhaps this man has so loaded you with wealth and luxury that you have grown to care for that, forgetting his cruelty, but you are afraid to let me know it. If that be true I will fathom your secret. You cannot hide it from me.”

My words frightened her. She placed her hands upon my shoulders pleadingly.

“Juan, Juan,” she said mournfully, as though she would have me say no

more. The unhappy condition she was in, and her apparent acquiescence angered me. Releasing her hold upon me, I cried:

"Take your jeweled hands away. Perhaps they were the price of your affection. Is it because you fear me that you will not tell me the truth?"

My actions and words hurt her more than a blow. By my thoughtlessness I had pained her more than Andrade could with his diabolical scheming.

"Must all men be cruel?" she asked. "How your words hurt me, Juan. I could not help it. I could not help it."

I turned from her. "I cannot believe you," I said, despairingly. "You are too clever to be outgeneraled."

It seemed that all the coloring of her

Spanish nature was concentrated in her next words.

“Juan! Juan! How can you be so cruel! Can I never make you understand? Everything I could do I have done. Everything I could say I have said. I was helpless. Can you not forgive? Can you not forgive? Can you not forgive?”

My doubts faltered and, won by her pathetic appeal, I answered:

“Mariana, I could forgive you anything.”

She smiled gently. A sweet smile of righteous triumph.

“I knew you could, Juan. You are so good—so gentle-hearted. We must yield to the inevitable. I have told you the truth. Go now. You must go now.” And she held her hand out in farewell—

a calm, saintly farewell, so different from that of the evening I left for Spain that I was maddened with jealousy of Andrade.

“Ah, Mariana,” I cried, “the touch of your hand has kindled the flames of love again. Why must our love live only in the imagination? I must have one kiss—one last chance to hold you in my arms and have you for my own.”

She was startled and frightened at my words, and spoke quickly, nervously.

“No. Will your conscience allow that? No. I have gone too far already.”

“Would you not have me to love you?” I said, reproachfully.

“Juan,” she answered, “if I would have you love me, I would use all my arts to keep you. I would use my eyes,

and if you resisted them I would use smiles, and if you yielded not, I would use my voice, filling it with soft, caressing tones, until you followed me as though I were a siren, calling, calling for you to follow," and she receded as she spoke. Then she laughed a careless laugh, a light, rippling laugh, that shattered all my romance and brought me to my senses.

"Tomorrow you will regret tonight's speeches. If it were love only I asked I would not fear, Juan, but I want more than love. All men can love to some degree, but few can love so well that they can forgive."

"I can forgive," I whispered.

"When the price of that forgiveness is to forget?" she asked.

The whole world seemed to be slip-

ping from me as she spoke, and I powerless to do aught save watch it. On it swept like a vague impression before me, and Mariana, too, was slipping away with it. As with Orpheus, for me the semblance was not enough, and the reality must be proven. I must hold her. Mariana, my Eurydice, must not be lost forever, and I clasped her tightly in my arms.

“No, Juan,” she pleaded. “No.”

“Why do you fear?” I asked, for she shook like a captured bird, frightened, but safe.

“Because you have broken down my courage,” she sobbed. “This man has treated me like a statue, a thing to be admired, or like an animal to be tortured. You have seen him. I had almost forgotten what love is. His heart

is as cold as the craters of those snow-capped, dead volcanoes. It is not because I did not love you that I treated you as I have. It was because I was afraid of myself. Afraid that what has happened would happen. You have gone too far. You have made me forget that I am Senora Andrade. Ah, Juan, why did you come?"

And she rested her head against my shoulder and sought consolation in tears.

CHAPTER XIV.



CHAPTER XIV.



S Mariana sobbed, Andrade stepped, unobserved by either of us, into the doorway. He was drunk and was calling in a confused manner to the other members of the dinner party to follow. And they, too, appreciative of the cooling effects of the night air, followed. He paused as he entered the patio, and then, motioning silence to the approaching guests, he approached us, saying softly to the guests:

“Ssh! Ssh! There is our virtuous wife enacting a scene the like of which

she refused to read. The vane of her religion has swerved again. Ah, what a comedy! What a comedy! Stay here while I approach." And he chuckled lightly, "What a comedy!"

Our minds were so steeped in despair that we saw and heard nothing. At this moment Mariana raised her head and said, earnestly:

"Juan, you must forget this night—forget that I have ever said I loved you. When Senor Fernandez meets Senora Andrade they are only friends."

Then, startled by the footsteps of the approaching Andrade or that strange faculty that sometimes without the aid of the senses makes the presence of another known, we turned.

"Only friends," repeated Andrade, and then chuckled, "Senora Andrade is

such a humorous person. Only friends, ha, ha, ha. I should have walked less heavily and your speech would have had a different ending."

"I did not hear you," said Mariana.

"You are too clever to admit it, but I do not expect you to," said Andrade with a gesture of slyness. "My old friend, Fernandez. I knew it. I knew it. Ha, ha, ha. Come forward, friends, forward."

Mercedes Granada here found an opportunity to revenge herself, and spoke disdainfully.

"It seems Senor has found more than he expected to find in the garden."

"Ah, Senor Fernandez," said Ramon Ruiz, "you are still here?"

"He did not seem to enjoy our com-

pany, so we might have suspected this," added De Mofras.

Andrade now interrupted.

"Guests, make yourselves comfortable. Senora has found the proper setting for her reading. I should have known that while Senora can read anything well, she only surpasses when she is in the proper mood. This moonlight night makes the patio a fitting stage for her to act upon. If you are through rehearsing, Senora, we will be glad to hear you."

Mariana answered positively, and with courage:

"You will excuse me, Senor, and I will explain all to you tomorrow, when you are alone."

"I did not ask for any explanation,"

answered Andrade. "I am delighted to find you human like the rest of us."

Then, addressing De Mofras, he asked :

"Duflot, will you bring that charming little French masterpiece to me?"

"You do not intend to re-enact that scene, Senor?" I asked.

"I see no reason why Senora should refuse now," answered Andrade, suavely.

"That book is unnecessary, Monsieur de Mofras," I shouted, "and you will answer to me if you get it." Then, turning to Andrade, I said :

"Senor Andrade, if you dare to ask your wife to read that I will punish you for the insult. She has done nothing to deserve your censure, and I alone deserve that."

"Then why was she here with you?" asked Andrade.

"Because I called her," I replied.

"I am not complaining," said the host; "I am not even angry, but I blame her. The woman is always to blame. I know women too well."

"You know that kind of women," I answered, pointing to his guests, "who enjoy the misery of your wife, and you get your theory from men like those who give you encouragement."

"What!" shouted Mercedes Granada, angrily.

"You dare to insult us!" demanded De Mofras.

"Hold, hold," said Andrade. "It is the hot fever of youth and inexperience that makes him speak so. You think I do not understand women, Senor Fer-

nandez.- I knew you would come some day and try to steal her from me. I tried to make her forget you. I failed. Then I sought to be revenged. I have been cruel by all possible means. The Castilian dagger of jealousy, like the sword of Damocles, has hung by a hair over her head. Now I have made her cringe for the first time. Can you not tell by the blush of shame upon her cheek that she knows in thought at least she has been unfaithful to me? I know her thoughts. At last I have made her fear me."

Then, turning to Mariana, he continued:

"You need not look so frightened. I only show you in your right light to this mistaken youth who took you for a

IN THE SHADOW OF SAN JUAN

saint. I am done now. I am revenged and I can pay the price."

He paused, and then continued in a dazed, almost solitary manner, to speak:

"She was the beauty of San Juan when I married her—the saintly daughter of Senor Saucedo. Look at her now. She had an uncurbed will, but I have broken it. She had rosy cheeks when I met her. Look at them. She had luscious lips that melted in a kiss. Look at their pious lines. She had soft, loving eyes, but I have made them spiritless. The beauty of San Juan, they called her. What has she now to show? Am I not revenged? Even the veil of her religion has not protected her. It has been my means of revenge."

It is difficult to account for the strange mood that fell upon Andrade

that night, nor will it ever be known whether it was the result of a drunken frenzy, a distorted idea of justice, or a climax following a long life of mental and physical strain, but he broke off into a remarkable combination of wisdom and imbecility. The one expressed in his words—the other in his physical action, for almost in a moment Andrade broke from an apparently well-preserved middle age into feeble old age. He was standing near the doorway as he spoke.

“We are a great trio, we three. She’s Faith,” pointing to Mariana, “and you are Hope,” indicating me, “and I am Charity,” he concluded. “I am Charity,” he repeated in a tone that sent a shudder through us. And he chuckled to himself as he turned again toward the

house, walking with great feebleness. Then, stopping in the doorway, he turned again, and muttered:

“Faith, Hope and Charity. Ha, ha, ha. Faith Hope and Charity, but the greatest of these is Charity. Ha, ha, ha. The greatest of these is Charity.” And his ghostly laugh lingered and died away after he disappeared in the house.

A strange feeling held us quiet. No one moved. That numb condition of the mind premonitory of disaster made us powerless to act. It was as though Andrade's will, determined to carry out his plans, had paralyzed ours. Mariana seemed lost in frightened thought as though her mind was following the confused wanderings of Andrade's reason. The loud report of a pistol brought us to our senses. Mariana, as though she

had seen all, cried, "That was his meaning. He has freed me. But I must go to him."

At that moment Pedro appeared in the doorway and announced in frightened tones:

"Senor is dead."

A long silence ensued.

"That was not a French revenge," said De Mofras in awed tones.

"No," answered Mercedes Granada with quiet cruelty. "It is worse—a Spanish revenge, for now Senora's conscience will prevent her marrying her young admirer."

Thus it remained for a woman to strike the fatal blow.

The long strain of this unhappy conflict at last broken, and thoroughly heart-broken at the tragic ending of An-

drade, Mariana collapsed completely. She did not long survive Andrade, but declined rapidly, and the story of one history of the days of the Padres was at an end. And now she rests, as she lived, in the shadow of her beloved Mission of San Juan.

“To what purpose was such a life?” repeated Juan Fernandez. “God alone knows. When age exhausts our physical forces we can only hope to continue life on the spiritual plane, as did Mariana. Her life should be an example and inspiration in the world.”

Expressed in the answer of Juan Fernandez was the Mission Age's solution to the problem.

A rustling breeze rose about me, whispering the modern—“The world was made for you, you, you.” And I thought

IN THE SHADOW OF SAN JUAN

of Andrade, who had satisfied desire, and Mariana, who had conquered it. To what end?

The mantle of Night fell over the valley. The Mission ruins became a great shadow against the neutral background and Time and Night drew a curtain before the Past.

THE END.

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